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MORISONIANISM REFUTED:

A

REVIEW

OF THE

REV. JAMES MORISON'S

EXPOSITION OF THE NINTH CHAPTER OF PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A DEFENCE OF INFANT BAPTISM," &c.

ALEX. GARDNER, PAISLEY.
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PREFACE.

THE Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is a very important portion of the word of God. This is acknowledged by all. It has been characterised as the "chapter of chapters." It has formed the battle-field of many a hard-fought polemico-theological contest. Hence the importance of a sound exegesis of its several parts; and the duty of investigating it in an humble, candid, and prayerful disposition of mind.

The work of the Rev. James Morison,* on this part of Scripture, is dedicated to all "the Professors of Theology, in the Established and Unestablished Churches in Scotland;" and contains an invitation to *them* to "come forth, in all the might of their great abilities, and in all the panoply of their extensive acquirements," to the investigation of the topics discussed in his work. As the writer of the following pages cannot "stand forth" thus panoplied and arrayed, it may seem presumptuous on his part to engage in the discussion; and perhaps it is so. He is far from thinking himself qualified to grapple with this "great argument" in all its breadth, and aspects, and bearings. There are certain respects, however, in which it may be viewed,

* An Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. By James Morison. Kilmarnock, 1849.

in some degree level to the capacities of ordinary minds. His work is not intended for "Professors of Theology." It does not aspire to any thing so exalted. Its aim is much less ambitious. It is meant for the class to which the writer himself belongs, and to all who, like the noble-minded Bereans of old, "search the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things are so." It has been composed during the few "leisure hours" in the evening of the day, which business, and the pressure of other engagements, have permitted him to enjoy. In these circumstances, he has not been able to mature his thoughts in the manner he would have wished; and hence some of the defects and blemishes of the present work. Its faults are probably more numerous than he is aware of.

When the writer perused, for the first time, the work of Mr. Morison, he was very much startled at the nature of some of his conclusions, and at the amount of plausible reasoning, learning, and research, displayed in their defence. This determined him to give it a second and a more careful perusal; and then he was still more startled to discover that it contained an amount of sophistry and unfair statement truly astonishing. That such is the case, he has endeavoured to make good; and he leaves it entirely with the reader to say how far, or whether or not, he has succeeded.

A. G.

PAISLEY, APRIL, 1852.

REVIEW

OF THE

REV. JAMES MORISON'S

EXPOSITION OF THE NINTH CHAPTER OF PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS is an elaborate, and in some respects a learned and able work. The author is undoubtedly entitled to the praise of great industry; though we cannot commend the tone and manner which he frequently assumes. As it is our wish to deal with the book itself, however, and not with its author, we shall pass over, without farther notice, this and some other matters on which we might have animadverted.

The task which the author has undertaken,—namely, to reconcile the ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, with the dogmas of Arminianism,—is a hard and difficult one; and it will not excite much surprise though he has failed. This is not the fault of the author; for he has left no stone unturned that was likely to aid him in his enterprise. He seems to have exhausted, thoroughly and com-

pletely, all the available sources of evidence on the Arminian side of the question; and we are glad that he has done so. In examining any set of opinions, we like to know *all* that can be said for or against them. On this ground, we have to thank the author for his labours. We now know the *worst* that can be said against the Calvinistic interpretation of this celebrated chapter, and also the *best* that can be advanced in favour of the Arminian view. The author has certainly brought to bear on the subject, a great mass of learning and research; but, in our apprehension, its effect in many cases, has been to darken and obscure what is otherwise plain and obvious. In reading over the pages of his exposition, we have been frequently beclouded; and we had just to wait till the clouds of learned dust had passed away, when the clear and unmistakeable meaning of the apostle began to shine forth in majestic and silvery brightness.

As intimated above, the object of the writer is to harmonise the statements of this important portion of holy writ with the tenets of Arminianism. In the prosecution of this object, he examines with commendable minuteness and particularity, every word and phrase in the chapter. It would be inconsistent with our design, and perhaps tedious, to follow the author through the whole of his exposition: nor is it necessary, as we concur in many of his interpretations. We propose therefore, to confine

our attention chiefly to those points and passages with regard to which we consider the author guilty of wresting the language of inspiration for sectarian purposes. But that we may carry our readers intelligently along with us, it will be necessary that we take a glance at the general bearing and import of the chapter. With this view, let us read over together the first, or introductory section of it,—Verses 1 to 5:—

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen."

In these verses, the apostle expresses the deepest anxiety for the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, his "kinsmen according to the flesh:" he even avows his willingness, were such a thing right or proper, to be "accursed," or separated "from Christ for them."* He thus announced, in a manner peculiarly

* The author, following some ancient expositors, gives a different interpretation of the above passage. He proposes to read it thus:—"I have great grief and increasing agony of heart—(for I myself *used* to wish to be accursed from the Messiah)—for

delicate, but sufficiently distinct, his conviction, that they were about to be cut off from their high position, and peculiar privileges, as the covenant people of God, and were in consequence hovering on the brink of everlasting destruction. To them *had* "pertained the adoption, and the covenants, and the promises," &c.; but now, as a nation, they were to be denuded of these privileges, though there were still among them "a remnant according to the election of grace," (xi. 5.) To this announcement the apostle anticipates an objection, that such a casting away of the Jews would be inconsistent with the word of God, and with those covenants and promises to which he had referred, and which they had long enjoyed as their peculiar inheritance. To this objection, the apostle replies in the subsequent verses of the chapter.

It is in the course of replying to this objection, that the apostle takes occasion to announce those truths, and make those important statements, regarding which Calvinists and Arminians are divided. It is of importance, therefore, that we give "good heed" to the reasonings and averments of the apostle on this point. It is obvious

my brethren," &c. But though favourably disposed to this interpretation, we have not been able to bring our minds to adopt it. It does not harmonise with the train of the apostle's thoughts. As is remarked by Willet, in his "Hexapla," it is to suppose the apostle to have made a "vain oath," for "none doubted of his hatred to the name of Christ before his calling."

that the objection might have been met in various ways. The apostle might have replied to it by simply reminding his readers that the holy scriptures contained *threatenings* as well as *promises;* and as his countrymen had, by their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, justly exposed themselves to the infliction of these threatenings, the word of God, so far from failing, would be *fulfilled* in their rejection and overthrow. This, it is plain, would have been, so far as it goes, a just and valid reply to the objection; and had the apostle been an Arminian or a *Morisonian*, he would probably have contented himself with such a reply. But he goes much deeper into the matter. Under the guidance of inspiration, his far-seeing eye takes a wider gaze, a bolder sweep: he takes occasion to discourse of various dispensations of God—of his sovereignty—of his purposes—and of his special, distinguishing, and electing love. In short, the apostle gives what may fairly, for want of a better term, be called a *Calvinistic* reply to the objection. This, of course, is only our opinion of the matter; but we hope to be able to show that it is the correct one.

Let us now read over the next section of the chapter, verses 6 to 9:—"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In

Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son."

In the first of these verses, the apostle begins his reply by a statement that the announcement which he had made regarding the impending doom of the Jews, did not imply that "the word of God hath taken none effect," or had "failed." "For," says he, "they are not *all Israel*, which are *of Israel;* neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children." Here the apostle points out a twofold distinction that had always subsisted among the descendants of Abraham—those who were merely "of Israel," but not "Israelites indeed"—those who were the "seed of Abraham" by *birth* merely, but not his "children" in the sense indicated by our Lord, when he said to the Jews, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," John viii. 39. The establishment of this distinction has an obvious bearing on the argument of the apostle, implying as it does, that all who were not *true* Israelites, were not merely "children of the flesh," but "children of wrath," and thus in the condition of those for whom Paul expresses so much solicitude.

In proof and illustration of this distinction be-

tween the children of Abraham, the apostle refers to the case of Ishmael and Isaac, in the following terms: "But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called." These words are a quotation from Gen. xxi. 12, and were spoken by God to Abraham on the occasion of Sarah's request concerning Ishmael, "Cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." This request, it seems, was "very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son." "And God said unto Abraham, let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman: in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for *in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" In order fully to understand these words, it is necessary to look back to what God said to Abraham, when promising him a son by Sarah: Gen. xvii. 19, "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." And again, ver. 21, "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." These Scriptures, in connection with Gen. xvii. 7, make it clear that the covenant which God had made with Abraham, and the promises connected therewith, were to be implemented to Isaac and his seed. Now, this covenant and promises secured to them

not merely "theocratic and Messianic privileges," but, to some extent at least, a *blessing* on these privileges. In other words, they secured the continuance of a spiritual and godly seed in the line of Isaac, and to *this seed* Paul seems obviously to allude when quoting the above words. His object in quoting them is to prove and illustrate his position, that "they are not *all Israel* which are *of Israel*, neither because they are the *seed of Abraham* are they all *children*,"—that is, *spiritual* children. The apostle gives this very explanation of his own meaning—"That is," says he, verse 8, "they which are the *children of the flesh*, these are not the *children of God*, but the *children of the promise*," (or the children referred to in the promise) "are counted for the seed." It would have been little to the apostle's purpose to prove that one portion of Abraham's seed, to the exclusion of another, were his children in a sense that was quite compatible with their being merely "children of the flesh."

Our author, however, gives a different interpretation of the passage. He says, "It *could not* be his spiritual, believing, and glory-inheriting seed that was meant, seeing he has this from 'all nations,' and not *merely* from the descendants of Isaac,"—p. 177. But this is a very feeble objection. It is based on the assumption, that the "seed" referred to included *all* Abraham's spiritual children. It is plain, however, that it is only his

seed "in Isaac," to the exclusion of Ishmael and his posterity, that is meant. The apostle is not speaking of *all* who are the children of Abraham by faith, as contradistinguished from *all unbelievers;* but he is speaking *exclusively* of the *two kinds* of seed which sprang out of the loins of Abraham. The fact that the "father of the faithful" has now a spiritual seed among "all nations," is not inconsistent with this other fact, that, for a long time, his glory-inheriting seed was confined almost exclusively to the line of Isaac; and this is all that is implied in the interpretation contended for.

Let us now look at the interpretation which the author himself puts on the phraseology under consideration. He explains it thus—"It is in the line of Isaac, and not in the line of Ishmael, that thou shalt have thy *theocratic and Messianic seed,*" p. 178. This interpretation, of course, is (or at least is thought to be) more consonant to the Arminian scheme, which is based on the assumption that God has no special or sovereign love to individuals, or classes; but that he *equally* wills and intends the salvation of *all men.* And when the Scriptures speak of any privileges conferred on one class of men, to the exclusion of another, the abettors of that system seem to think it incumbent on them to eliminate, if possible, and as much as possible, the spiritual element from these privileges.

We object to the above interpretation, because,

First, It introduces into the reasoning of the apostle an entirely *new* distinction among the descendants of Abraham. In the previous context—as is admitted by the author—the apostle is speaking of a twofold division—those who were "Israelites indeed," and those who were merely "of Israel." But this interpretation supposes him to introduce a *third* division, and one that *embraces the other two*—the tendency of which is obviously to confuse.

Secondly, This interpretation does not suit the subsequent context, in which we have an inspired explanation of the words in question:—"That is," says the apostle, "they which are the *children of the flesh*, these are not the *children of God*." This, we submit, is the *same* twofold division referred to in verse 7. There cannot be a doubt as to what is meant by the "children of the flesh," and this helps us to the meaning of the antithetical expression, "children of God." This phrase occurs ten times in the New Testament: three of these occurrences are in this same epistle to the Romans, besides the one under consideration. In all these cases, it has obviously the high meaning we ascribe to it; and we know of no reason why its significance should be changed and lowered here, unless it be to accommodate it to the Arminian hypothesis.

But even the author's own interpretation contains an *element*, of which he does not seem to be aware,

that is fatal to the basis-principle of Arminianism. There lies concealed in the folds of his own argumentation a "logical giant," which only requires to be evoked that it may arise and overwhelm with confusion the author and his system. This will be evident to all our readers, if they carefully examine the following passage. He says,

"I beg you to observe, that the words of the quotation do not contain a formally-fashioned demonstration of the apostle's momentously important assertion—that it is not the case, that because the Israelites are the lineal seed of Abraham, therefore are they all his glory-inheriting children." "They only furnish us with the raw material of a mighty and irresistible argument in proof of his declaration; and we must work the material into proper logical shape and form, ere we can see the Herculean power of its proof. The argument to be worked out is what logicians denominate *an argument a minori ad majus*, one of the most powerful of arguments. To give the least experienced of my readers an idea of it, let me suggest a simple illustrative case. Suppose, then, that it were alleged, but falsely, that a certain man's wealth was great enough to purchase the finest palace in the kingdom. Suppose, moreover, that it was a matter of moment, in order to prevent, it might be, some friends from trusting their all into this person's speculating hands, to prove that his riches were not, to a thousandth part, sufficient to buy the princely residence; and then, suppose that there were produced a legal and most trust-worthy document, which affirmed that his wealth was actually insufficient to purchase a hut of the value of only £100. This legal document would enable any one to prove, with the utmost facility and conclusiveness, that his resources were utterly unequal to the acquisition of the regal residence. The document might not indeed assert that his wealth could not purchase a palace; but from its assertion that it could not purchase even a £100 hut, who would not infer, *a fortiori*, and

by a true logical *argumentum a minori ad majus*, that the money which was unequal to the lesser purchase, was utterly and absolutely, and ridiculously unequal to the greater? Precisely such is the apostle's mode of argumentation. His documentary quotation establishes the point, that mere lineal descent from the patriarch Abraham did not insure even theocratic and externally Messianic privileges. Ishmael was the son of Abraham as truly as was Isaac. His posterity, then, were as lineally descended from the patriarch as the posterity of Isaac, and yet it was to be "in Isaac, *to the exclusion of Ishmael*, that the Messianic seed was to be called to him," and associated with his name. Since, then, mere lineal descent from the patriarch did not secure even theocratic and externally Messianic privileges, it follows, by a cogent and most impregnable and infallible argument, that lies like a logical giant in the words of the Old Testament quotation, that mere patriarchal descent did not, and could not, secure the spiritual and everlasting privileges that were vouchsafed to Abraham himself. If pure and lineal descent from the patriarch was not adequate to the attainment of the lesser privileges,—and the case of the lineally-descended Ishmaelites is an irrefragable proof that it was not,—the consequence is inevitable, That the same descent could not be adequate to the attainment of the greater privileges."—pp. 178, 179.

Now, this is sound logic, if it is understood that the "lesser privileges" are included in, or are essentially connected with, the "greater"—in the same or a similar way that £100 are included in, and form part of, £10,000. A man cannot possess the latter sum, without having the former. In such a case, we may legitimately argue from the less to the greater. The *argumentum a minori ad majus* is a good and valid argument in all cases where the greater *includes* the less, or where the attainment of

the less is *essential* to the attainment of the greater. The case would be entirely altered, however, if the two kinds of privilege were dissimilar in their nature;—if, for example, the "lesser privileges" had consisted in wealth and honour, or in the possession of a beautiful and fertile country, like Canaan—in such a case, would the above argumentation hold good? Could we argue, that *because* "lineal descent from Abraham" did not secure to the Ishmaelites riches and honour, or the possession of a "land flowing with milk and honey;" *therefore*, the same descent could not secure to others heavenly riches? Assuredly not. It is a fact, no doubt, that descent from Abraham did not, and could not, secure the heavenly inheritance; but it is *no proof of this fact* that it did not secure, and could not secure, worldly riches and honours: so neither is it a proof of this fact that it was not adequate to the attainment of "theocratic privileges," unless on the supposition that these privileges were, as a *means*, or otherwise, *essential* to the attainment of everlasting life. The proper light, no doubt, in which to view "theocratic privileges," is to view them as *means*—the usual and ordinary means of grace and salvation—*essential* means, perhaps to the Israelites, on whom their observance was strictly enjoined; and in their case, when properly observed, attended with a *blessing*. But the reasoning of the author goes farther than this. As an argument "from the less to the great-

er," it leads to the conclusion that the attainment of the "lesser privileges" was *essential* to the attainment of the "greater," in all cases;—in other words, that it was *impossible* to obtain the higher privileges, without also obtaining the lower; just as it would be impossible for a person to obtain an inheritance worth £10,000, without also obtaining the value of £100.

Such, undoubtedly, is the conclusion to which the argumentation of the author leads. Now, is this a conclusion which he is willing to admit? Is he willing to allow that the Ishmaelites were "cast out" or cut off by God himself from privileges that were *essential* to the attainment of everlasting life? His reasoning, as we have seen, clearly leads to this conclusion; but we cannot imagine any thing more fatal to the basis-principle of Arminianism, or to the author's own sentiments, as we shall see by and by.

On other grounds, it might be shown that the reasoning of the author proceeds on the assumption, that the Ishmaelites were cut off, not merely from the "lesser privileges," but from the "greater" also. His position is, that "lineal descent from Abraham" was not adequate to secure the heavenly inheritance —and his proof is, that the Ishmaelites, though thus descended, did not obtain even theocratic privileges. But this is clearly no proof of his position, unless we suppose that they were also excluded from everlasting life. For if we suppose that though

deprived of the lower, they yet obtained the higher class of privileges; how could their case be a proof of the inadequacy of patriarchal descent to secure what they actually obtained? On this supposition their case would be a *stronger* proof to the contrary. It would show that the "descent" in question *was adequate*, even in the most unfavourable circumstances. It is thus clear that the argumentation of the author involves the conclusion that the Ishmaelites were excluded from both classes of privileges.

Some degree of obscurity attaches to the use made of the terms "theocratic and Messianic privileges," which the author is not careful to remove: for, though he employs these terms with very great frequency, he never, so far as we have observed, explains their full and conjoined import. Had he expounded to his readers the plenitude of blessing and privilege couched in these terms, and explained their intimate connexion with the "higher privileges," it would have enabled them to descry the inconsistency of his reasoning with the principles he avows. What the author calls the "lesser privileges," included, not only the establishment and organization of a church—not only the *means* of grace and salvation, but an *interest* in those gracious promises made to Abraham, such as, "I will be a God *unto thee*, and to *thy seed* after thee." What God promised to be to Abraham, he thus pro-

mised to be to his *seed* also: and this promise was not a dead letter. We know from the result that it secured the continued existence of a godly seed among his descendants in the favoured line. Even in the degenerate days of Ahab, there were "seven thousand men," whom God had "*reserved* to himself," and who had not "bowed the knee to the image of Baal," Romans xi. 8. And in the days of the apostle, when their peculiar theocratic privileges were about to expire, and the "kingdom of God" was about to be taken from them, there were still among them "a remnant according to the election of grace."

The distinguished and distinguishing favours thus bestowed on Isaac, and afterwards on Jacob and his posterity, to the exclusion of the Ishmaelites, and all other nations, is a fact frequently dwelt on in Scripture. It is the inspired theme of many of the "songs of Zion."

"The doctrine of his holy word
To Jacob he doth show;
His statutes and his judgments he
Gives Israel to know.

To any nation never he
Such favour did afford;
For they his judgments have not known,
O! do ye praise the Lord."

The Ishmaelites, on the other hand, being "cast out" from the church, or covenant people of God, were excluded from those *means* of grace and salvation conferred on their more highly favoured brethren. They were thus left to wander in spiritual darkness; and the consequence was, speaking generally, that they perished in their sins. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." There cannot be a doubt, that this representation of the matter corresponds with the *facts of the case;* and this may be considered as conclusive proof of its correctness. We do not mean to say that there might not be among the Ishmaelites, and other non-Israelitish nations, individuals and families, who, by maintaining a kind of patriarchal faith and worship, would be accepted of God. This is the conclusion involved in the reasoning of the author, which we distinctly repudiate. It cannot be denied, however, that, as a general rule, the people of God would be found "in Isaac," and his descendants, and not among the Ishmaelites.

It thus appears, from the facts and circumstances of the case, and even from the author's own interpretation, that the Ishmaelites were "cast out" from being the theocratic people of God, and in consequence were deprived of those privileges by which alone, in general, salvation and eternal life was attainable: while, on the other hand, Isaac and his posterity were, (even before any of them were born)

chosen by God to the enjoyment of those privileges and promises which insured a spiritual seed among them. They were born to an inheritance which included spiritual blessings, and privileges, and promises.

Now, we have not the slightest wish to exaggerate, even to a hair's-breadth, the importance and bearing of the fact thus established. However we may account for it, the fact itself is undeniable. Nor is it a solitary fact. It is not the only instance in which God has made choice of individuals and tribes, and conferred on them the rich blessings of grace and salvation. The same special spiritual favours bestowed on Isaac, to the exclusion of Ishmael, had been previously conferred on Abraham himself, and subsequently, (as we shall afterwards have occasion to notice), they were bestowed on Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau and his seed. Yet, in the face of these broad and undeniable facts, the author tells us, that

"God, in purposing to give all men an ultimate, and unalterable, and useful destiny, *desired* to give them all a *uniform destiny*. Whatsoever the destiny be, he desired it to be *identical in all*. It was *not* his desire to *divide* the human family, and to take only some upwards, while he banished the remainder to the place beneath. His love to one individual's soul *did not tower* above his love to the soul of another. His grace toward one did not transcend, in the upheavings of his fond emotion, his grace toward another. His kindness, in relation to man's immortality, was *not peaked*, like the hills, with depressed valleys between; it was *equal to all*, and *most impartial* to each."—pp. 426, 427.

As we may afterwards have occasion to animadvert more fully on the sentiments embodied in this extract, we shall not at present dwell on their plain and obvious contrariety to many of the facts and statements of scripture. If any of our readers be disposed to view them as breathing an amiable and benevolent and God-like spirit; we would just ask them to consider, that in proportion as the love or kindness of God is thus viewed as undistinguishing, and as extended *alike* to all, and made "*equal* to all,"—in the same proportion is its value and importance diminished. If the "grace" of God, notwithstanding the "upheavings" of its "fond emotions," could not avail to procure for the Ishmaelites even the "lesser privileges" of the theocracy, what is the good of it? of what value is it? If it be so, that even God, notwithstanding all his "purposing," and kind "desires" to give all men a "*uniform* destiny," that is, a heavenly destiny, could not obtain for many of them, even in an humble degree, the *means* of salvation,—to whom, alas! is the poor sinner to look for help? And may we not ask, What is to become of the nations, sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, if God himself, though cherishing the most benevolent "desires" in their behalf, cannot help them? Alas, for the prospects of the world, if such be a true representation of the character and perfections of God! And what, on such a supposition, can be the mean-

ing of such Scriptures as these,—"*My* counsel *shall stand*, and I will *do all my pleasure*," Isa. xlvi. 10—"The counsel of the Lord *standeth for ever*, the thoughts of his heart to all generations," Ps. xxxiii. 11—"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, *that shall stand*," Prov. xix. 21—"Our God is in the heavens; he *hath done whatsoever he hath pleased*," Psa. cxv. 3.

We have already made some remarks on the *argumentum a minori ad majus*—"the argument from the less to the greater"—as applied by the author to the interpretation of a portion of this chapter. As he obviously attaches the greatest importance to this method of arguing, and makes it the basis, to a considerable extent, of his exposition,—we may as well finally dispose of it now before proceeding farther. He characterises it as "fine and matchless logic,"—as "mighty" and "irresistible," and "triumphant," and as "startlingly-incontrovertible." He imputes it, of course, to the apostle; and on the strength of this imputation, he pronounces him "the prince of reasoners," an "inspired logician," and speaks of him as employing a "massive and ponderous chain of reasoning," and as possessing "an amazing skill of argumentation," that "appears to be superhuman." In short, the whole vocabulary of laudatory epithets is exhausted in exhibiting the "Herculean powers" of this method of arguing.

Now, as the apostle Paul is perfectly innocent of employing the mode of reasoning thus imputed to him, all this laudation and honour go for nothing—they are thrown away on the apostle, and must fall back on the author. Whatever merits attach to this method of arguing, undoubtedly belong to him. He is its fortunate inventor, and is therefore entitled to all the blushing honours of its discovery; and though he has modestly declined these honours, and bestowed all his care on the more humble task of enumerating and extolling its "superhuman" excellencies, we must not allow his modesty to divert from its rightful owner so much well-earned fame. Unfortunately, our estimate of its great qualities is very different from that of the author; and though quite willing to accord to him all the honour due to its invention, we are under the necessity of diminishing somewhat from its much-vaunted logical prowess. We have already shown that it contains an *element* that is fatal to the author's own system. This is but a small matter however, and, perhaps, in the opinion of some of our readers, might be considered a proof of its soundness. We have now to show that it contains a principle subversive of the great Gospel and Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. How? do any of our readers ask? Let us imagine that a Roman Catholic has got hold of this newly-invented process; and with its aid, he could easily make out his position that a man cannot be

justified by faith. Let it only be supposed that an Ishmaelite, or the native of any other non-Israelitish tribe, had become a believer in the God of Abraham. Well, the *faith* of this individual, though strong as that of Abraham himself, was not adequate to the attainment of "theocratic and externally Messianic privileges," therefore, according to the reasoning of the author, it was inadequate to the attainment of heavenly privileges. If it could not secure the lesser privileges, it must have been inadequate to the attainment of the greater.

It is hardly necessary to add, that a mode of reasoning that would lead to such a conclusion must be utterly naught and vicious. No doctrine was dearer to the heart of the apostle than this same doctrine of justification by faith. It is, therefore, especially bad to attempt to palm on him, a method of reasoning that would lead to its subversion.

There are several questions involved in the argumentation of the author, to which he pays little or no attention, but which have an important bearing on the subject. One of these questions relates to the *value* of "descent from Abraham." If it could not secure even "theocratic and Messianic privileges," what could it secure? What was it adequate to the attainment of? It is plain, that all its value, as compared with that of any other descent, arose from the covenant which God made with Abraham. Now, the privileges from this source were expressly

limited to Isaac and Jacob, and their seed. The Jews knew this well enough; and when they boasted of having "Abraham to their father," and expected any advantages from this circumstance, it was, without doubt, not on the ground of *mere* descent—a descent that was common to them with the Ishmaelites and Edomites,—but on the ground that they were Abraham's children in the favoured line of Isaac and Jacob,—in other words, that they were "*Israelites*, to whom *pertained* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the promises," &c. This being the case, it is obvious that it would not have been a proper reply to them,—and no proof of the worthlessness of *their* descent; but rather a proof of its speciality, importance, and value,—to refer to the rejection of Ishmael. That was not *the descent* of which they boasted, and to which they attached importance, and from which they expected to derive any advantage.—It thus appears that the entire superstructure of the author's argumentation is based on a misconception of what the Jews actually believed and expected in relation to their descent from Abraham; and of course this misconception vitiates and nullifies the much-vaunted reply which the author imputes to the apostle.

Let us now proceed to the next section of the chapter, namely, verses 10 to 13—"And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one,

even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

In the previous section, our readers will recollect, the apostle produced a clear and striking proof of his position, that *all* the "seed of Abraham" are not his spiritual, or glory-inheriting children. His proof consisted in the fact, that the Ishmaelites, though lineally descended from the patriarch, were cut off from the benefit of those covenants which secured a godly seed among the posterity of Abraham.

In this section, the apostle gives another proof and illustration of the same truth. But in this case, he carries his readers a little farther onwards and upwards to the culminating point to which all his reasoning in this chapter tends. That point, as we shall afterwards see, is, That salvation "is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," verse 16. The attentive reader cannot fail to observe that, in the passage now under review, the apostle traces up to the "purpose of God," and to "Him that calleth," the different destinies of Jacob and Esau, with their posterities. He thus carries his readers into the very thick of the argument between Calvinists and Ar-

minians. The "cardinal point of difference" between these two parties is, "whether the reason why one man is saved, and another not, is owing to the grace of God, or to the free will of man." The two systems represented by these parties may be illustrated by the different answers which may be given to the two questions which the apostle proposes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "Who maketh thee to differ? and, what hast thou that thou hast not received?" To the first question the Calvinist replies, that it is *God* alone who maketh him to differ; to the second, that he has *nothing* which he has not received. The Arminian gives a different answer to both questions. To the first, "Who maketh thee to differ?" he answers, *Himself*. To the second, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" he answers, *Faith*. Our readers cannot fail to see that the above passage has an important bearing on the argument between these two systems: and that all its influence or weight belongs to the one which teaches us to look up to God, and to his "purpose"—his "purpose according to election," for the different destinies of man.

The apostle, in this, as in the previous section, proves his position by a quotation, or rather two brief quotations from the old Testament Scriptures. The first is taken from Gen. xxv. 23; the second, from Mal. i. 23. With regard to the first, it forms the concluding part of the answer which God him-

self gave to Rebecca, when, in her peculiar circumstances, she "went to inquire of the Lord." "And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; *and the elder shall serve the younger.*"

The first point in this quotation to which we would direct attention, relates to the phrase rendered "shall serve." Very considerable importance attaches to the correct interpretation of this term. It is like the key-stone of the arch. The entire exposition of the passage will be affected by the view we take of its meaning.

The author remarks, that "this peculiar phrase appears substantially to express the idea, that the greater people would be *much inferior* to the lesser, that is, would be much inferior *in privilege*, in *Messianic privilege*," p. 200. And this, so far as it goes, we consider a sound interpretation—only it does not go far enough. Why limit the inferiority to "Messianic privilege?" Was that the *only* respect in which Esau and his posterity were "inferior" to Jacob and his posterity? Is this a point suited to the design of the apostle in making the quotation? Does the establishment of this point enable him to establish his position, that *all* the "seed of Abraham" are *not* his *spiritual* children? Why, in *this* respect, eleven of the twelve sons of

Jacob were as inferior as the Edomites. The expression, "shall serve," is evidently one of those brief and comprehensive phrases in which a vast amount of meaning is couched—it is one of those pictures in which the Pencil of Inspiration, by a single touch, has depicted the destinies, and history, and character, of an entire people, or rather of two peoples. It is, in itself, a *prediction*, and the best exposition of it is to be found in its *fulfilment*. In what respects, then, were the Edomites *inferior* to the Israelites? Their *greatest* inferiority, without doubt, consisted in their being, like the Ishmaelites, excluded from the church or covenant people of God, and in this way, from the *means* of grace and salvation, and from that *interest* in the covenant-promises made to Abraham, which secured a glory-inheriting seed among his posterity. It may be true that, at one period of their history, the Edomites were "actually reduced into *political subjection* to the Israelites;" but this, as a point of inferiority, and as compared with the other respects mentioned, is but as the small dust of the balance; and it obviously has no bearing on the argument of the apostle.

The author remarks, "that the expression *shall serve* cannot surely mean 'shall be unconditionally reprobated to damnation?' Where is the lexicographer that has given it such a meaning? Where is the common sense that could endorse such

a meaning, though some learned lexicographer should have dared to give it?" p. 202. Now, this appears to us a very stupid objection to come from a Professor of Divinity! Why, it is not the business of the lexicographer to expound and interpret—that is the business of the expositor; and the author, as a professed exegéte, might have known this. Where is the lexicographer that has given *his own* interpretation of the term? Apply this mode of reasoning to other similar passages of Scripture, and its absurdity will be at once apparent. For example, who would ever think of applying to the lexicographer for a true and full explanation of such terms as "bruise," and "head," and "heel," as they occur in Gen. iii. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall *bruise* thy *head*, and thou shalt *bruise* his *heel*."

The *design* of the apostle in making the quotation—the *manner* in which he introduces it as a case of "election," not "*of works*, but of Him that calleth"—the subsequent context—and the *facts of the case*—all clearly evince that there is a *spiritual* element in the expression under consideration. But even though we were to admit, what many Arminians contend for, that the superiority conferred on the Israelites—in so far as it was of a religious nature—consisted *merely* in the bestowment on them of the *means* of grace and salvation, *without* the accom-

paniment of effectual grace, or the promised blessing, the result would be the same. What becomes of the nations who have "no vision," no prophets, no teachers, no Sabbaths, no "lively oracles," no Scriptures, "able to make wise unto salvation?" All these, and numerous *miraculous* manifestations besides, were conferred on the Israelites; and yet, it is to be feared, the largest number of them were not saved. And if so, what may be predicated of those who have enjoyed none of these advantages? The *result* of such deprivation is not a matter of conjecture—it is a matter of history. Where is the nation or people, placed in such circumstances, who have not sunk into the grossest idolatry and wickedness? And is not such a view of the matter absolutely and irreconcilably at variance with the author's doctrine, that "God, in purposing to give all men an ultimate, and unalterable, and useful destiny, *desired* to give them *all* a *uniform* destiny? Whatsoever the destiny be, he *desired* it to be *identical* in all." How does such a view of the character and procedure of God comport with the *exclusion* from the *means* of salvation, first of Ishmael, and then of Esau?

The author, and Arminians in general, are very anxious to make it appear that this exclusion did not refer *personally* either to Ishmael or to Esau, but to their *posterity*. But does this mend the matter in the smallest degree? In our

opinion, it has an entirely opposite tendency. Both these individuals, for a time at least, enjoyed religious instruction and example: and it might be said that their *foreseen* misimprovement of these privileges was the cause of their rejection. In their case, it might be said, we see nothing more than what happens every day among ourselves. When the child of pious parents grows up, and, like Esau, despises what may be called his birth-right, or his parental and religious advantages, what is the consequence? He is excluded from the church of God, and becomes a "reprobate." Such was the merited destiny of Esau. But what shall we say of his descendants, countless thousands of whom never heard of the true God, and of the way of salvation? Why were *they* abandoned and reprobated? Why were they excluded from the *means* of grace, and from the church of God? This is *the great fact* with which Arminians have to contend, and which stands out in bold and stern opposition to their system, and which it is impossible for them to explain away.

With regard to the question, How far, or to what extent, the "election" of Jacob, and the rejection of Esau and his seed, involved the "unconditional reprobation" of the latter, we do not wish to say a single word beyond what the facts of the case will fully warrant. The term "reprobated," means "abandoned;" and it is a plain matter of fact, that

the Edomites were left to themselves, and the consequence was, that they became idolaters—they sunk into a state of heathenism. And we can hardly conceive of a case of more hopeless or "unconditional reprobation" than that of the millions who live and die in a state of heathenism, "without God, and without hope in the world." The Edomites were left in the same condition as the Ishmaelites, whose case we have already considered; and the result of this abandonment, in most cases, it cannot be doubted, would be their everlasting ruin. This is implied in the argument of the apostle; for how otherwise could their case furnish him with a proof that *all* Abraham's seed were not the true children of God? The same thing is involved in the argumentation of the author himself, who adopts the same mode of reasoning and illustration in this case, as he did with reference to that of Ishmael.

These views, regarding the predicted inferiority of Esau and his seed, are confirmed by the other quotation which the apostle makes from the Old Testament, and by the manner in which he introduces that quotation—thus: "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This declaration—which the author justly characterises as a "*stronger* statement" than the one employed to intimate the inferiority of Esau to Jacob—is taken from Mal. i. 2, 3; and it may be well to give the passage in full. "I have loved you, saith

the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

We agree with the author as to the way in which the peculiar phraseology embraced in the terms "loved" and "hated" ought to be interpreted. It is illustrated by what is said in Gen. xxix. where we read, verse 30, that Jacob "*loved* Rachel *more* than Leah;" which is thus explained in the next verse, "And when the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren." Here the *lesser love* that Jacob bore to Leah is spoken of as *hatred*. Another illustration of this phraseology occurs in John xii. 25. "He that *loveth* his life shall lose it; and he that *hateth* his life, in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."

These passages indicate with sufficient clearness, the force and general bearing of this phraseology; and show that the "hatred" of which Esau was the object, may simply mean a much smaller degree of love than that bestowed on his brother: but *how much* smaller must be learned, not from the phraseology itself, but from the facts and circumstances of the case. A due consideration of these must, therefore, furnish us with the proper data on which to form a correct judgment in the matter. In what respects, then, did God show his "love" to Jacob, and,

with regard to which, he showed *none* to Esau?—We have already adverted to some of these, in considering the superiority in privilege by which Jacob was distinguished above Esau, and we need not again go over the same ground. The respects in which Esau was inferior to Jacob, correspond exactly with those in which God showed his "love" to the one brother, and his "hatred" to the other. This is clearly implied in the reasoning of the apostle, who adduces the quotation from Malachi as a proof and illustration of the statement, that "the elder shall serve the younger."

On Jacob, though the younger brother, was conferred the "birth-right;" and he was made the heir to those covenant-promises made to Abraham; and this secured to him and to his seed after him, a rich inheritance of spiritual blessings and privileges. To them exclusively "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Besides these privileges, they enjoyed the ministration of a long line of inspired teachers and prophets, whom God raised up, from time to time, to warn, to guide, to instruct, and occasionally also, to comfort them. Some of their kings, too, were not only men of renown, but were distinguished for their wisdom and piety; and must, therefore have been a great blessing, in a spiritual point of view, to the people over whom they presided. Nor were these

advantages altogether in vain. God's "love" to them was not that "stinted charity which does its work by halves." The promises made to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac and Jacob, secured at all times, to some extent, a *blessing* on the means of grace and salvation; and this blessing is compared to the "dew of Hermon," so proverbial for its copiousness, and its life-reviving influences. "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, *even life for evermore*," Psa. cxxxiii. 3.

The author maintains that the "love" bestowed on Jacob was *not* the "love of election to everlasting life," nor "the love of a complacential esteem," nor "the love of a Christ-providing compassion;" but "the love of peculiar favour which God manifested to the *people* descended from the man Jacob, in constituting them the *Messianic nation*."—Now, it is plain as the sun at noon-day, that the "love" of God to the Israelites secured to them other advantages besides constituting them the "Messianic nation." "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: *thou art mine*—I am the Lord *thy God*, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast *precious* in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and *I have loved thee*.—I, even I, am he that

blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember *thy sins*.—Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour *my Spirit upon thy seed*, and my blessing upon thine offspring.—Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for thou art my servant, I have formed thee: thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy *transgressions;* and as a cloud, thy *sins:* Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee," Isa. xliii. 1, 3, 4, 25; xliv. 2, 3, 21, 22. These Scriptures (which are but a scantling of what might be cited) demonstrate beyond all doubt, that the "love" of God for ancient Israel provided *all spiritual blessings;* and consequently, that it was comprehensive of "electing love," "complacential love," and "Christ-providing love." It seems to us a matter of surprise that any man with the Bible in his hands, should doubt or deny this. The "love" in question was undoubtedly connected with the Abrahamic covenant, which again was connected with the covenant of grace,—that eternal covenant between the persons of the Godhead, from which, as from a living fountain, flows all the love, and mercy, and grace of God to our fallen race. The author asks,

"Can it refer to what has been designated the

electing love of God, that love that is said to have dwelt from everlasting in God's bosom in reference to a favoured *little number* of the human race, whom God has unconditionally predestinated to the enjoyment of everlasting life?"—This he tells us, is "the opinion of scores of commentators, of hundreds of preachers, and of hundreds of thousands of Gospel-hearers." He, however, calls upon every one who "would have his mind *linked* to the nobler mind of the apostle, and *bathed* in the ocean-mind of God," to give up this opinion.—But all this great "talk" about the "nobler mind of the apostle," and the "ocean-mind of God," is simply an ingenious, perhaps a modest, way of lauding the author's own "noble mind." It looks very like an invitation to the good people of Scotland to forsake their present teachers, and to place themselves under his tutorship; and he will instruct them how to "*dive* into the mighty profundity of the thoughts of God." After all this flourish of trumpets about "nobler minds" and "ocean-minds," as contrasted with those minds who can only see in the "love" of God for Israel, security for the salvation of a "little number,"—one would naturally expect that the author was about to favour his readers with a profound and magnificent view of the *greatness* of this love. This is the theme to which the apostle refers—this is a theme that animated the "nobler minds" of inspired men, in days of old, who were so deeply impressed with

a sense of the magnitude, as well as the tenderness, of this love, as to be unable suitably to express it. Nay, more, this theme frequently occupied the "ocean-mind of God" himself, who again and again and again refers to it in terms indicative of its peerless and unmatched greatness. Now, if the author had been really desirous of "linking" his own mind, or the minds of his readers, to the nobler minds of prophets and apostles, or of "bathing" them in the "ocean-mind of God," he would have followed in the same track. But instead of this, he pursues a directly opposite path. Instead of showing, or attempting to show, that the "love" in question, secured the everlasting salvation of a countless multitude, he actually repudiates the idea that it infallibly secured the eternal salvation of *any* souls. Nay, he speaks of it as a "fearful perversion" of the apostle's logic, to suppose that this "love of God" involved the "irrespective," that is, the *certain* "predestination of some souls to glory," and that the "hatred" mentioned in the passage involved "other souls" in everlasting woe. The "love" and the "hatred" of God mentioned are thus viewed as alike innocuous, in so far as the eternal interests of man are concerned. And this, forsooth, is "bathing in the ocean-mind of God!"

We must hold the author guilty of a wilful misrepresentation, if he means to say, that there are "scores of commentators" who maintain that the

elect of God are only and absolutely a "little number;" and this, we submit, is the impression which he wishes to leave on the minds of his readers. He knows very well that the commentators to whom he refers, believe that the elect are a "great number which no man *can* number." That they are *few comparatively*, is an opinion which we ourselves hold; but not without good reason—"Many are called, but *few* are chosen." "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." This is not a matter about which there ought to be any dispute, however we may differ as to the way in which it is to be accounted for.

The author objects, that "if it were the love of an unconditional election to everlasting life that is referred to, then the inadmissible conclusion must be welcomed, that the people descended from the man Jacob—ay, the *entire nation of the Jews*,—were fore-ordained to everlasting life."—p. 244. But this is a very feeble objection. The author argues on the assumption—the foolish and unsupported assumption—that the love in question must needs be exclusively of one type; and that it could not include both "election love," in the sense explained, and "love that rested on, and circled around, *all* the people descended from the man Jacob." It is plain, however, that this is the case; and that it comprehended two elections, one of individuals, to

everlasting life—and one of the whole people, to the privileges of the theocracy. This is the only supposition that will fully explain and harmonise the statements of Scripture on the subject. This supposition is also in accordance with the *facts of the case*, and this is pretty conclusive proof of its accuracy. The "love" of God for Israel was just the love of God for the *church*, which Israel was: and will any man say that this is not "electing love," and "Christ-providing love." The author, however, notwithstanding his boasting about "*diving* into the mighty profundity of God's thoughts," does not seem to have dived deep enough to have perceived this. Those covenants, and promises, and declarations, in which this love found an utterance and a tongue,—and the actual and recorded realization of these,—all proclaim, in a manner not to be gainsayed, that the "love" in question was not of the stinted and earthly description indicated by the author; but that it embraced and "circled around" individuals and persons; and that too, in a measure correspondent to the grace vouchsafed to them.

Undoubtedly it is the case, that, in a sense, this "love" embraced, in its ample folds, the entire people of the Jews; and we may add, that it did so, in all their relations: as individuals, as families, as a nation, and as a church. But this is no proof that it was undistinguishing, or that it was "*equal* to all." It is the very object of the apostle, in the

passage under consideration, to show that there always had been a distinction among the descendants of Abraham. His position is, that "they are not *all Israel*, which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children," that is, all "the children of God,"—as the apostle himself explains it. This implies that *some*, yea, a goodly number of them were God's people. The declaration quoted from Malachi would not have been to the point, unless it involved, to some extent, a proof of this. In the previous chapter, (viii. 28), the apostle states that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are *the called* according to his purpose;" and these "called," he afterwards denominates "God's elect;" and in the following chapter, (xi. 5), he speaks of them as a "remnant according to the election of grace;" and he informs us that, in the days of Elias, there were 7000 such, whom God had "*reserved* to himself, and who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." These things show, as a simple matter of fact, that there always had been, amongst the seed of Jacob, a goodly number of persons "fore-ordained to everlasting life;" or, to adopt the apostle's language, (ix. 23), "vessels of mercy which he (God) had afore prepared unto glory." Now, if "all things work together" for the good of such, there can be nothing unreasonable in supposing that God's love for them

lay at the bottom of all his love for the Jews, and of all those gracious arrangements in their behalf, by which they were distinguished above all the nations of the earth. We find, from Gen xvii., that God would have spared the devoted cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, had there been *ten* righteous persons in them. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that God's merciful dealings with the Jews, during forty generations, were chiefly, perhaps, for the sake of those "vessels of mercy," whom he was thus preparing for glory.

The *design* of God in bestowing on the Israelites so many spiritual privileges, is an important consideration, and it has an important bearing on the subject in dispute. But—will it be credited ?—this is a point which the author carefully eschews: and the reason is obvious. The merest glance at the *design* of God in granting these privileges to the Israelites, and withholding them from the Edomites, would have enabled his readers to detect, at once, the shallowness of his reasoning, and the unscriptural nature of the principles he avows. If God's love were "equal to all;" if his love and his designs of mercy towards the Edomites had been "equal" to what he showed to the Israelites, would he not have extended to them the same, or equal privileges and advantages? If God had been "equally" desirous of the salvation of the Edomites as of the Israelites, would he not have bestowed on them the

means of grace and salvation? No rational man would expect to reap from a field on which he had bestowed no pains, no culture, and in which he had sowed no seed, the *same* rich and abundant harvest that he expected to reap from another field, on which he had bestowed the greatest care, and had sown it with the best seed he could procure. The simple fact that God acted so differently towards the two peoples, is conclusive proof of what his designs and intentions were, and clearly indicates the nature and extent of his "love" to Jacob, and by consequence, the fearful amount of deprivation couched in the term "hatred," as used in reference to the Edomites.

It thus appears that God so "loved" Jacob and his seed, as to bestow on them, with a liberal hand, the *means* of becoming "wise unto salvation," with the accompaniment, to a large extent, of a *blessing* on these means: while, on the other hand, he so "hated" Esau and his seed, as to leave them without any of these advantages. These are the plain facts of the case, which no sophistry and no ingenuity can explain away. Men may shut their eyes to them, and may try so to obscure them, as to prevent others from seeing them distinctly—they may fret and rage at them, but it is all in vain. The facts themselves remain intact on the sacred page: they remain calm and unmoved amid the strife of tongues and the storm that rages around

them—like the rock of the ocean, against which a thousand billows have dashed in vain. They are, no doubt, humbling facts—humbling to the pride of human reason. But instead of resisting them, it is at once our duty and our wisdom meekly and acquiescingly to submit to them; and to regulate our conduct, and our conceptions of God by the light which they throw on his character. As a part of "the ways of God," they must be consistent with justice and equity, with love and mercy. Nothing can be more finely appropriate and just than the remark of the apostle on this subject, "What shall we then say? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid," verse 14.

We have already intimated that the author, and Arminians in general, are very anxious to make it appear that, in the passage under consideration, there is no reference either to Jacob or to Esau *personally;* but only to the *people* descended from them. The author endeavours, at great length, to prove this; and having succeeded to his own satisfaction, he raises the shout of victory. Thus he exclaims, "O what a *host* of predestinarian and necessitarian theories are stunned by this conclusion! What a *mass* of soul-buffeting exposition is swept away, as with the besom of a merciful destruction, and like chaff before the whirlwind, by this natural interpretation! Nay, what a *multitude* of theological spectres are chased away into their native

nonentity by the light of the clear meaning of the one word *Esau!*"—Now, these shouts of triumph, as we shall presently see, are rather premature, and withal a little too loud. Our readers may, perhaps, feel some difficulty in guessing who or what those "hosts" and "multitudes" are, whom the author thus valorously discomfits and chases away into nonentity. But we cannot help them out of this difficulty. We suspect that these "hosts" are literally "spectres," whom the author has conjured up from the "vasty deep," that he might have the satisfaction of routing them, and thus proclaiming himself a victor. We cannot conceive of a single predestinarian idea or "theory," that is "stunned" or affected by the substitution of Esau's *posterity* for Esau *himself*. Of all the conceivable modes of interpreting the terms Jacob and Esau, or their equivalents, "the elder" and "the younger," that which would *limit* the meaning or application exclusively to the twin-sons of Isaac, appears to us the *least* predestinarian, and to present the fewest difficulties to the Arminian system. That the passage teaches some kind of predestination, and some kind of reprobation, is undeniable, and is admitted by the author: Now, if this, when predicated of one or two individuals, be an evil, a thing to be deprecated, and explained away, if *possible*, what advantage is gained by extending it to an entire race, during a period of thirty or forty generations?

Were it our object to defend Calvinism at all hazards, and without any regard to its scriptural authority, we should at once accept of the author's interpretation of the terms Jacob and Esau, as the one most favourable for our cause—though we could not admire his generosity, in thus attempting to throw overboard the whole posterity of Esau, for the sake of Esau himself. But as our object is truth, we cannot consent to defend it by arguments to which we have no just or valid claim. The cause of truth, and a conscientious regard to the principles of scriptural exegesis, compel us to differ with the author on this point, and to maintain that not only Jacob and Esau, but their posterities also, are referred to in the passage.

The term "Esau," (and of course "Jacob" also,) may be used, and is used in Scripture, in three different acceptations. 1. It means the *man* Esau —this is its primary, literal, and most natural signification. 2. It means the Edomites—the entire race—the whole of Esau's posterity, *including* himself. 3. It means the people descended from Esau, or some particular generation of them, to the *exclusion* of the man Esau.—The author does not keep distinctly in view these different acceptations of the term—he confounds the *second* with the *third*—the consequence is, that though he maintains that the term is used in the *third* sense, in the passage under review, and attempts a proof of this; yet

his arguments only prove the *second* sense. He proves satisfactorily—what the contexts of the two quoted passages show clearly—that the terms Jacob and Esau are used to designate not merely the twin-brothers, but their descendants also. The *facts of the case* show also the same thing. This conclusion is also involved in the reasoning of the author himself. He refers (p. 237) to Heb. xi. 20, as an instance in which the terms are used with a "*personal* reference" — "By faith Isaac blessed *Jacob* and *Esau* concerning things to come." It is plain, however, that the terms are here used in the sense for which we contend. The "blessing" pronounced by Isaac on his two sons is explicitly said to be "concerning *things to come.*" Undoubtedly, therefore, this blessing was not limited to the persons of Jacob and Esau, but extended to their posterities. Indeed, the author tells us (p. 200) that this "blessing," in so far as it concerned Jacob, included an "*exegesis* of the predictive expression, *shall serve;*" and this phrase he himself refers exclusively to the *descendants* of Jacob. We may add, that the "blessing" referred to, seems to have been connected with the "birth-right;" and the loss of it to Esau caused him to raise "a great and exceeding bitter cry." This is pretty good evidence that it was a matter in which he was *personally* interested, as well as his posterity.

The whole question on this point may be com-

pressed into a nutshell, or at least into a few simple questions. *When* did the Edomites become inferior in "Messianic privilege" to the Israelites? Was it in Jacob's life time, or after his death? Did Esau enjoy as *many* spiritual privileges, and promises, and visions, as Jacob? Did he *equally* enjoy with his brother, the theocratic honour of being called "a Prince, who had power with God, and prevailed"? *When* was it that the "birth-right," with all the personal privileges which it involved, was forfeited and lost? *When* did God begin to "love" Jacob, and to "hate" Esau, in the sense explained? Was there none of this "love" enjoyed by the *man* Jacob? Was it all reserved for his posterity? These questions, we submit, must all be answered in one way, and they are decisive of the point in dispute. It appears to us something ineffably absurd to attempt to *exclude* Jacob from the blessings indicated as his portion, or to exempt Esau personally from the things predicated of him in the passage. It is like an attempt to prove that Jacob was not a Jacobite, and that Esau was not an Edomite. How would the author himself like to be treated in this way? What would he think if an attempt were made to prove that he was not a *Morisonian?* If it were asserted that the Morisonians were a sect distinguished for their zeal and exegetical acquirements, would the author think himself handsomely treated, if he were excluded? True, things may

come to be justly said of the sect which bears his name, that would not apply to him personally; and we admit that things are said in Scripture of the Israelites, that do not apply to Jacob; and the same remark applies to the Edomites. But where the things asserted obviously apply to them, as well as to their descendants, it is absurd to think of excluding them. All the things predicated of the two brothers in the two passages quoted by the apostle, apply to them *personally*, as well as to their posterities; and this, we submit, is decisive of the question.

Having thus indicated our views regarding the import of the two important quotations which the apostle makes from the Old Testament, in proof of his position, that all the children of Abraham by *birth* are not his glory-inheriting children,—let us now turn back to the two verses which form an introduction to these two quotations, namely, verses 10 and 11. "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth,) it was said," &c.

This passage does not require many remarks for its elucidation. The first clause of it, "And not only this," is retrospective: it looks back to the previous context, to the case of Isaac and Ishmael;

and it intimates to us that the apostle is about to adduce another, and a still more pertinent proof and illustration of his position, that *all* the "seed of Abraham" are not the "children of God." The remaining portion of the passage narrates the *circumstances* in which the prophetic oracle, to which the apostle refers, was uttered; and also the reason, or at least one reason, why it was so uttered in these circumstances. It was "when Rebecca had conceived," that is, *while* she was pregnant with twins, and before the children were born, and therefore before they "had done any good or evil," that it was said to her, "The elder shall serve the younger." And the apostle gives us to understand, that this prophetic declaration was made to Rebecca by God himself in these circumstances, in order that the purpose, the elective "purpose of God might stand," and might plainly appear to be an election, "not *of works*, but of Him that calleth." The apostle thus traces up to the fountain-head, the two divergent streams represented by the different destinies of Jacob and Esau, and their descendants. That fountain-head is God himself, or his purpose—his sovereign purpose "according to election."

The apostle does not say that God's "love," or his "grace," or his "kindness," towards Jacob, "did not transcend, in the upheavings of its fond emotion, his grace," or his goodness towards Esau, or that it was "equal" and "most impar-

tial" to each of the two brothers. He does not say that the reason why their destinies were so different, was, that the one brother, in the exercise of his free-will, made a good use, and a right improvement of the privileges conferred alike on both. Such a representation would have suited *exactly* the scheme of the author and his friends. Now, it is true that for a time, the two brothers enjoyed equal external advantages; and it is also true, that the one brother made a better use, and a better improvement of his privileges than the other. But this, the apostle assures us, was not the cause, the primary cause, why Jacob was elected and preferred to his brother. The great First Cause, in this case, as in all others, was God himself. We thus see the reason why Jacob was enabled to improve his privileges. It was the love and grace of God vouchsafed to him. Hence the appropriateness of the apostle's conclusion, "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but *of God that showeth mercy*."

The author cannot deny, and does not deny, that the election of Jacob, and the rejection or reprobation of Esau and his posterity, was the act of God himself. But, of course, he attempts to show that the apostle is not speaking of "election to everlasting life." That must not be. The author cannot allow that God's "love" to Jacob and his seed was of this exalted character. Such a love as this would be too warm—too intense for the system of the

author; and therefore it must be *cooled* down a bit —cooled down to the do-nothing-efficiently point. Accordingly the author maintains that the apostle, in the passage before us, is speaking "*exclusively* of election to be the theocratic and Messianic people of God." And he adds—

"Now, it was a *necessary* thing that there should be an election of such a people. Only one nation could, in the nature of things, have the Messiah for its interior seed."—p. 214.

We are very unwilling to accuse the author of any thing like disingenuity; but certainly the manner in which he here, and elsewhere, confounds the privileges of the theocracy with the honours of a fleshly relationship to the Messiah, requires explanation. Of course, only *one* of the sons of Isaac "could, in the nature of things," enjoy the honour of being the ancestor of Christ. But if this circumstance rendered it "a *necessary* thing" that Esau and his posterity should be cut off from theocratic privileges, why were not eleven of the sons of Jacob, with their seed, subjected to a similar excision? Only "one" of them "could, in the nature of things," be the progenitor of the Messiah. Yet we see that this formed no barrier in the way of all of them becoming "the theocratic and Messianic people of God." Moreover, is the above the reason which the apostle gives for rejecting Esau? Does the inspired historian give the slightest hint of such a

thing? Do the Scriptures any where allude to such a reason? But of course the author knows far more about the matter than all these put together!

Doubtless the "purpose of God" in "electing" Israel, comprehended the bestowment on them of theocratic privileges, and the honour of being *related* to the Messiah. But the idea of *limiting* it to these two things, appears to us a piece of most extravagant folly. It is to overlook altogether the *design* of God in choosing the Israelites to be his "peculiar people" — his "peculiar treasure" — a "holy nation" — a "kingdom of priests." What would be thought of the wisdom of a company of merchants who should "purpose" to build, furnish, victual, and *man* a magnificent ship, without the least thought or "purpose" of sending it to sea on some mercantile speculation? Would the author himself be guilty of the folly which he by implication imputes to his Maker in this case? Would he "purpose" to build a church or chapel, without determining the use to which it was to be applied, and without using all the means in his power in order that his design in erecting it might be attained?

The election of Israel included the organization of them into a *church*, the bestowment on them of a ritual of worship and ordinances, and the appointment of proper officers to administer these. It included an interest in those gracious spiritual pro-

mises made to Abraham. In short, it included *all* that God did for them as his chosen people; and we know that he *did* "take out of them a people for his name," as he did afterwards from the Gentiles, when he "opened the door of faith" to them. Even in the worst of times, he "reserved to himself" a goodly number of them "according to the election of grace." These are plain and undeniable facts, that are written on the sacred page as with a sunbeam. It requires no profound "diving" to discover them. They lie on the surface; and unless the author had "winked very hard," he must have seen them staring him in the face.

Perhaps the author might be offended, were we to leave this part of the subject, without noticing his discoveries regarding original sin, and his profound acquaintance with psychomachy. He asks us to "pause a little, and consider the important fact that the Spirit himself assures us here, that before Jacob and Esau were born, they had neither *done any good*, nor *committed any evil*." The reason why the apostle makes this plain and simple statement is clear; it is to evince the truth of his doctrine, that the election of Jacob was an election entirely of grace, and not "of works"—an election that could not be traced to any thing in either Jacob or Esau, but had its origin alone in "Him that calleth." At the time referred to, the twin sons of

Rebecca were not born, and of course had done no good, and had not committed, and were not capable of committing any *actual* transgression, either "in thought, word, or deed"—not in "thought," for they were not capable of thinking—not in "word," for they had never spoken—not in "deed," for they had done no action of any kind. The apostle is not discussing the subject of original sin, and says nothing to indicate the opinion, that no *moral taint* attached to them, by imputation or otherwise, from their connexion with the first of men. The author remarks,

"If they had done no good, to give them a claim upon God for some peculiar favour, they had as little done any evil, that could expose their souls to his everlasting displeasure and curse, and make it a right and righteous thing in Him to ordain them to everlasting wrath for the glory of his sovereign power. If "moral evil" be sin, and if sin be "moral evil," then there was no voluntary sin within them; and what reason-respecting man can conceive of *involuntary sin* being within any entity in heaven, earth, or hell."—p. 208.

Had the author limited these remarks to unconscious infants, there is a sense in which we could have admitted their soundness; but he slides away from their case into a definition of sin or moral evil, applicable to "*any entity* in heaven, earth, or hell;" and thus arrives at a conclusion in which we cannot concur. To have "done no good" is perfectly excusable in an infant; but on the part of an adult, involves a high degree of criminality—in fact, is *the* ground on which a righteous sentence

of condemnation is pronounced on the wicked at the last day—"Inasmuch as ye have *done it not*," &c. The author might advantageously take a lesson on the subject of sin, from a small book which is usually put into the hands of children in this country; and in which sin is described as a "want of conformity" to God's law, as well as a "transgression" of it. Viewing sin in the light of this definition, and in the light of the moral law, which requires us to "love the Lord with *all* our heart, mind, soul, and strength," we are prepared to maintain—despite the author's threat that he will hold us unreasonable—that there is much "involuntary sin" on earth. Our Lord compares a wicked man to a "corrupt tree," which *cannot* "bring forth good fruit." The Scriptures speak of those who "*cannot* cease from sin." "*Can* the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also learn to do good, that are accustomed to do evil," Jer. xiii. 23. In proportion as a man becomes wicked, and "accustomed to do evil," in the same proportion he becomes more and more an "involuntary sinner," but not on that account a less heinous transgressor.

Again, says the author,

"Doubtless the first sin of our common parent Adam was imputed both to Jacob and Esau, and imputed to them in such a sense that they were treated by God in reference to continuous life upon earth, as if they had committed it. They were consti-

tuted mortal on its account; and not only mortal, but also, and consequently, liable to those corruptions of the flesh which not only precede and terminate in the dissolution of the soul and body, but likewise afford avenues by which powerfully-alluring temptations get access to the incarnate spirit. All this, however, is a totally different thing from the idea that there was embosomed in the very essence of their souls an actual sinfulness that made them the fit objects of the everlasting wrath of God. Such a sinfulness they themselves were not guilty of, for they had not done *any evil;* and if, therefore, it was any thing positive at all, the Being who fashioned it and lodged it in their hearts, must necessarily be himself an evil-doer and sinful. In other words, if there was sinfulness in their God-given spirits, before they themselves "did any evil," it must have been God himself the Creator of their immaterial, and therefore unpropagated souls, who was (O horrid impiety of blasphemy!) its Patron and its Parent."—pp. 208, 209.

This passage calls for several remarks. The author tells us that the "first sin of our common parent Adam was *imputed* both to Jacob and Esau:" but the effects of this imputation he *limits* to their being "constituted mortal," and to their being made "liable" to disease and temptation. Now, certainly, the punishment justly due to Adam's "first sin," included not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal death; and if this sin *was* imputed to Jacob and Esau, how comes the author to know that they were *only* "constituted mortal," and "liable" to temptation in consequence of this imputation? We want to know his authority for this limitation. Has he been constituted a judge in the case, that he takes it upon him to *remit* a part of the sen-

tence? We wish to know how it is *only* "in reference to continuous life upon earth," that they were "treated by God as if they had committed" the sin referred to? He cannot surely expect us to receive *his* unsupported assertion in a case of this kind. He cannot pretend that there would be any injustice in the case, if God should inflict the full penalty due to Adam's first sin on those to whom he imputes it, because the infliction of a *part* implies that the *whole* might justly be inflicted. If there is any injustice in the case at all, that injustice must attach to the *imputation* of the sin, and not to the legal consequences of it.

Again—does the author mean us to understand that a *mere liability* to "corruptions of the flesh, by which powerfully-alluring temptations get access to the incarnate spirit," is all the depravity or corruption which the fall of Adam has entailed on his posterity? Is this a *peculiarity* of fallen man? Were there no "avenues" by which temptation got "access" to the "incarnate spirit" of Adam before his fall? And if so, how did he happen to fall? And is it only "powerfully-alluring temptations" that now "get access?" Are all other "temptations" either refused "access," or repulsed? Is the "incarnate spirit" pure, and holy, and spotless, aye and until these "powerful temptations" get access to it? Does it naturally, and but for

these temptations, "love the Lord" supremely, and its "neighbour" as itself?

The views of human depravity which these questions are intended to meet and expose, are defective and unscriptural in the extreme. The author, however, seems to be afraid that he has gone too far in admitting the mortality of man, and his liability to temptation; and accordingly he goes on to say, that "all this is a totally different thing from the idea that there was embosomed in the very essence of their souls an *actual sinfulness* that made them the fit objects of the everlasting wrath of God. Such a sinfulness they themselves were not guilty of, for they had not done any evil; and if, therefore, it was any thing positive at all, the Being who fashioned it, and lodged it in their hearts, must necessarily be himself an evil-doer and sinful."

Now, what does the author mean by "actual sinfulness? Not a little sophistry, or something worse, lurks in the use made of this expression. In the connexion in which it is employed, it obviously means *actual* sin—*actual* transgression; for it is "*such* a sinfulness" as the unconscious infants were "not guilty of, *for* they had not done any evil." And yet it is insinuated, that Calvinists are stupid enough to believe this—to believe that before Jacob and Esau were born, and before they had done any evil, they were guilty of this "actual sinfulness"—a sinfulness which, if "any thing positive at all,"

the author assures us, must have been "fashioned" by God himself, and "lodged" in the "hearts" of the unborn babes! Now, what a monstrous idea is this! What a strangely-constituted, or strangely-perverted mind the author must have, even to conceive such an idea as that of God "fashioning" "actual sinfulness," and "lodging" it in the hearts of children before they are born! What can have induced the author deliberately to write down, and place before his readers, such an idea!—an idea of which it is difficult to say whether the absurdity or the blasphemy are the more conspicuous! Surely the author cannot but know that he was grossly misrepresenting the sentiments of those whom he is affecting to answer. We have no doubt that, when a child, he was taught that "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the *guilt* of Adam's first sin, the *want* of original righteousness, and the *corruption* of his whole nature, which is commonly called *original sin;* together with all *actual* transgressions which proceed from it." * Here a broad and clear distinction is indicated between the "corruption" of man's nature, and those "actual transgressions which proceed from it." We shall not stop to inquire into the author's reason for overlooking it, and thus misrepresenting the party to whom he is opposed.

The author entertains the notion, that the

* Shorter Catechism.

"souls" of men are "God-given spirits," and, being "immaterial," are "therefore unpropagated"—that is, they are created directly by God himself, and therefore pure and spotless. Hence he concludes, that the evil dispositions which a child manifests, "almost as soon as it is born," are to be traced, not to the soul, but to the "*influence* of its propagated, and therefore corrupted *flesh*," p. 209. Now, with regard to the psychological question here raised, we are aware that a similar view to that of the author is taken of it by eminent writers. But we are not quite sure of the soundness of that view. It receives little countenance from Scripture; and at all events, it is too abstruse and metaphysical a point on which to decide a theological question. We know little of the nature of the human soul; and we are profoundly ignorant of the *modus* of its connexion with the body. It may be true that "souls," as such, are not "propagated;" but there can be no doubt that *men* are propagated, and man is a compound being, consisting of soul and body. We read, in Scripture, that "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Man was at first created in the "image of God;" but this image he lost—he sinned and fell from his high estate—he became depraved and corrupted. And "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Job xiv. 4. Accordingly, we read that Adam, after his fall, "*begat a son* in his own likeness, after

his own image," Gen. v. 3. It is not said that he begat the *body* of a son, and God gave it a soul. This would have been the reading of the passage, had the author indited it.

According to the above theory, the source of the evil dispositions in man is something either extrinsic, or in his "flesh"—that is, his body. He is now "liable to those corruptions of the flesh" which afford "avenues" by which temptations get "access to the incarnate spirit." Such is the author's account of the matter. But how different is the language of Scripture on the subject! There the root of the evil is traced to the *heart*. "Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders," &c., Matt. xv. 19. "The *heart*" is declared to be "deceitful above all things, and *desperately wicked*," Jer. xvii. 9. Nay more, we are told that "*every* imagination of the *thoughts* of his *heart* is *only evil*," and that "*continually*," Gen. vi. 5. These statements are very strong; and it might be supposed refer merely to the wicked, or to the heathen: but it is not so. "Behold," says the inspired Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," Ps. li. 5.

These Scriptures, which are in strict accordance with our experience and our consciousness, indicate clearly the *seat* of that moral disease which afflicts the race descended from Adam. They show that

man is now a depraved and corrupted being—corrupted in soul as well as in body.

The doctrine of human depravity is a fundamental one. It lies at the basis of correct views of the gospel, and of a just conception of the relation in which man now stands to his Maker. We had understood that a denial of it was peculiar to the system of Pelagianism. No doctrine is more plainly revealed in Scripture. It is clearly, emphatically, and unmistakeably enunciated in the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This passage furnishes an instructive commentary on the language of the Psalmist, already referred to. It shows clearly that there is something morally wrong with man from his very birth, and that it is of a radical nature. It is not a defilement that may be washed away with "nitre and much soap." It is not a slight defect, to be easily supplied—or an excrescence, which will wear off—or a wound, acquired after birth, which may soon be healed. It is not a mere "liability" to some evil, which skill and prudence and experience may avoid and overcome. It is not simply an "avenue" by which "access" is obtained to the citadel of the soul, and which may be shut up or effectually blockaded at any time. It is something that requires a "new birth"—a regeneration; and a regeneration by the "Spirit." "The moral reno-

vation here spoken of," says Dr. Woods,* "is represented as necessary for all men. Ἐάν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν. The sense is, that *no man*, no *human being*, who is not the subject of this renovation, can be a partaker of the benefits of Christ's kingdom. The necessity of this renovation, as appears afterwards, arises from the character which man possesses in consequence of his *natural birth*. Of course it is necessary for every child of Adam. "That which is born of the flesh, is *flesh*." "By flesh," says Rosenmüller—in agreement with commentators generally—"is meant the nature of man,—man with all his moral imperfection, subject to the dominion of his bodily appetites. And he who is born of parents who have this moral imperfection, is like his parents."

As formerly noticed, the author admits that Adam's "first sin" is "imputed" to children, and that, in consequence, they are "treated by God in reference to continuous *life upon earth, as if they had committed it*." But notwithstanding of this admission, he maintains that "the *worst* and the best that they deserve is, that they be *allowed a period of moral probation*, that they may either morally stand or morally fall," p. 209. We confess our inability to reconcile these statements. It seems to us that they cannot *both* be true. If the "worst" that children deserve be, that they be

* Works, vol. 4, p. 32.

"allowed" to live a considerable period; it cannot be true that they *ought* to be "treated" as deserving of death. That they *are* thus "treated" is a melancholy fact; and this, we submit, is conclusive proof that they "deserve" it. Are we to suppose that they are treated "worse" than they deserve? The author would almost seem to think so, for he adds, "Hence it is, that when dying infants are, without an intervening period of moral probation, translated direct from the womb, or from the cradle, to glory—and thither, undoubtedly, is every individual dying infant translated—they are blessed to an infinite degree beyond their deserts." Of course, they had "done no good"—nothing to *entitle* them to glory; but as they had been cut off without enjoying a "period of moral probation"—and thus treated "worse" than they deserved—they were fairly entitled to some *compensation* for the ill treatment they had received in this world. This is a legitimate conclusion from the author's doctrine; but such a conclusion, we suspect, would involve too strong a dose of Pelagianism, even for the author: and accordingly he concludes by saying, that "Such blessing they could receive only for the sake of the glorious God-pleasing mediation of that mighty God and humble Man—Christ Jesus," p. 210.

It is difficult to conceive the author's design in introducing this last sentence, unless it be to give

a sort of evangelical aspect and appearance to his views. In the conclusion of the immediately-preceding paragraph he had said, speaking of infants,

"If they *cannot sin*, it is *blasphemy* to suppose that God *could*, for the manifestation of any of his glorious attributes, or for any other reason whatever, adjudge and ordain them to everlasting destruction."—p. 209.

This surely implies that it would be *unjust* in God to punish them, and this, be it observed, not on the ground of Christ's mediation, but on the ground that they "cannot sin," and had not sinned. Such being the case, according to the author's hypothesis, what can he mean by their obtaining a place in heaven through the "glorious God-pleasing mediation of Jesus?" Christ is the Saviour of *sinners*—He is called Jesus, because he "saves *his people* from their *sins*"—He came to "seek and to save the *lost*"—He was "manifested to take away *sin*." Now, if those who die in infancy "cannot sin," and have never sinned; and if the "guilt of Adam's first sin" does not attach to them, they are not among the "lost" whom Christ "came to seek and to save,"—they are not among the number of those for whom his "God-pleasing mediation" has been provided—and they could not join the heavenly choir in glory, in singing, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed

us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!"

We now proceed to the consideration of the next section of the chapter, namely, verses 14, 15, 16.

"What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

The first clause of this passage is both retrospective and prospective. The illative vocable "then," bids us look back to what was said before. The other part of the clause, "What shall we say?" bids us look forward to what is to come; and this we find to be an *objection*, couched in the interrogation, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" The apostle thus anticipates that it *might* possibly be objected to something which he had advanced, that it was inconsistent with the justice of God. What that "something" is, we have now to determine. Considerable importance attaches to the correct determination of this point. The apostle had advanced various statements, and it is plain that if we commit a mistake in attributing the objection to a statement or doctrine to which it does not properly belong, we shall probably not only misapprehend the answer, but in-

troduce confusion into the train of the apostle's argumentation. The author says, that whatsoever it was, "it is manifest that it *must* be a doctrine that ran counter to the *national* prejudices of the Jews —those prejudices that would be apt to warp the minds of the only half-instructed though converted Israelites in Rome," p. 270. We do not know on what authority the statement is made, that the " converted Israelites in Rome," were "only a half-instructed" people. Paul speaks of them in somewhat different terms: " Your faith," says he, "is spoken of throughout the whole world." The Church at Rome was composed, as appears from chap. i. 13, *chiefly* of Gentiles; and if so, there seems no necessity for supposing that this objection "must" be one, having its origin in the "*national* prejudices of the Jews." It seems just as likely that it might have its origin in those "prejudices" that are indigenous to the soil of human nature; and so would be apt to spring up in the minds of both Jews and Gentiles. There have always been persons who contended that God's "love," and "grace," and "kindness, in relation to man's *immortality*," being "*equal* to all, and most impartial to each," he does not exercise what is properly called his *sovereignty* in the bestowment of grace and salvation; but, on the contrary, when he "elects" individuals to be his "peculiar people," this election is on account of their manifested or foreseen faith and good

works—that, consequently, the "turning point" in man's salvation is something *in himself*, and *not in God*. The author knows well that such opinions have long prevailed, and still prevail. And he cannot deny that the apostle *seems* to teach a different doctrine on these points, in the previous part of the chapter. He cannot refuse to admit, also, that there is *very considerable difficulty* in explaining the language of the apostle in harmony with these views. He himself once thought that the doctrine of "unconditional election and preterition" was taught in the passage; and it was only after two years' hard study, and probably with a considerable *desire* to find a different doctrine in it, that he found out his mistake. Nay more, there are, even according to the author's own showing, in the present day, hundreds of thousands of gospel hearers, and thousands of preachers, and scores of learned expositors, who still think that the apostle teaches the doctrine of "unconditional election and preterition;" and, consequently, that in reference to "man's immortality," God exercises his sovereignty—electing to salvation "whom he will," and showing mercy and compassion on "whom he will." In such circumstances, it is surely not to be wondered at, though the "half-instructed" and "prejudiced Christians" in Rome should have fallen into a similar *mistake*,—as the author now considers it,—or at least, that the apostle, who knew something

of human nature, might fear that such an objection might spring up in their minds. And we have only to take a slight glance at the nature of the *answer* which the apostle makes to the objection, to see that it is precisely of the kind we have indicated. The objection is obviously founded on the idea that it would be unrighteous in God, and inconsistent with his character, (or, at least, the character which *some* parties have formed of him,) to suppose that he would exercise his *sovereignty* in showing mercy, *saving* mercy, "on whom he will,"—or that he should "elect" *some* to everlasting life, and pass by, or abandon others, even before they were born, and "before they had done any good or evil," and without any reference to their "works," either foreseen or manifested.

Now, how does the apostle meet the objection founded on these views? Does he turn round and say, 'It is all a mistake—You have quite misapprehended my meaning—I have taught no such doctrine as you suppose—I have said nothing inconsistent, and did not mean to say anything inconsistent with the idea that God *equally* desires and intends the salvation of all men—I had no intention to make you believe that God showed *more* favour in matters of religion, for Isaac, than for Ishmael—Notwithstanding what I have said regarding the great "love" of God for Israel, and his "hatred" of Esau and the Edomites, you are not to suppose

that God was less desirous of the eternal salvation of the latter people than of the former; and though, it is true, he bestowed a most abundant supply of the *means* of salvation on the one people, and few or none on the other people, you are to believe, nevertheless, that God's love and kindness, in relation to their "immortal interests," was "equal" to both, and "most impartial to each," and that he desired to give both people a "uniform destiny." "Whatsoever the destiny be, he desired it to be *identical*" in both.'

Does the apostle, we ask, express himself to this effect, or any thing like it? The very opposite. But if he had been as anxious as the author is, to disabuse the minds of his readers, of any thing like a Calvinistic or predestinarian tendency, he must have done so.

The apostle gives a two-fold answer to the objection. He first meets it with a stern and unqualified negation—"God forbid!"—that is, Let it not be! Let no one think so! Away with such a thought! He then proceeds to show that there *cannot* be, in any of the statements he had made, or in any of the facts to which he had referred, any thing inconsistent with the righteousness of God, because God himself actually claims it as one of his prerogatives to act in the manner he had ascribed to him. He shows distinctly that the Lord claims the right and prerogative to *elect* "whom he will," and to show

mercy and compassion "on whom he will." Ver. 15, "For he," that is, God, "saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." This is the unmistakeable language of supreme and rightful authority. God here speaks as a *sovereign*. The phrase, "I will," occurs four times in this one sentence, and indicates emphatically the idea of undivided, unlimited, and peerless supremacy.* "Mercy" is the important theme on which he speaks; and He, and none but He, is entitled, on such a theme, to assume the lofty and majestic tone of the great Moral Governor of the Universe.

As already hinted, this answer clearly indicates the nature of the anticipated objection; and not only so, it throws a flood of light on the previous part of the chapter, and on the cases of Ishmael and of Esau. It shows that, in the "love" bestowed on Isaac and Jacob, there was an element of mercy, *forgiving* mercy and compassion. It shows that the "kindness" bestowed on them was not *merely* of a temporal, worldly, or exclusively national character, and thus confirms the view we took of these cases.

The author, having decided that the particular doctrine which the apostle apprehended might be objected to as inconsistent with the "righteousness

* "This kind of speaking, *I will, I will, I will, I will*, doth import the greatest resolvedness imaginable, and the greatest peremptoriness that can be expressed."—Loveday, Expos. in loc. p. 121.—Quoted by the Author, p. 289.

of God," *must* be "one that ran counter to the *national* prejudices of the Jews," casts about for a doctrine to suit this view of the case; and he considers it "manifest that it would be the one grand doctrine which is vindicated throughout the chapter, —the doctrine, viz., *that the Jews, notwithstanding their peculiar relation to God, and their pre-eminent Messianic privileges,* were on the eve of being *everlastingly cursed by God,*" p. 271. This statement may be understood in two senses. It may simply mean, that the great body of the Jews who had rejected the Saviour were—and would be, if they continued in unbelief—"everlastingly cursed." This is a true statement, and it is involved in the doctrine of the apostle: but we think it exceedingly *unlikely* that any of the "converted Israelites in Rome" should either challenge its truth, or hesitate as to the *rectitude* of the procedure implied in it. Why, this would be to call in question a great principle that lies at the very basis of the Gospel scheme. "He that *believeth not* is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God," John iii. 18. It is easy to conceive of unconverted and unbelieving Jews objecting to such a doctrine; but that any one who had really fled to the Saviour, and had believed in him "to the saving of the soul," should entertain a doubt on this point, appears to us incredible. And then, were we to grant it, the reply of the

apostle would be most inappropriate. The proper reply, in this supposed case, would have been found in the above saying of our Lord, John iii. 18, or any similar declaration of Scripture.

The above statement, however, may be intended to mean, that the Jews, *as a nation*, were now to be deprived of those privileges which they had long enjoyed as God's "peculiar people"—in other words, that the "kingdom of God" was about to be "taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This is also a true statement, and involved in the doctrine of the apostle. It is one, moreover, which we can suppose that some of the "converted Israelites in Rome" might hesitate about acquiescing in—nursed, as they had been, in the belief, that when the Messiah came, he would "restore again the kingdom to Israel." But that *this* was not the "particular doctrine" objected to, is evident, we think, from the nature of the reply given to it. That reply is embraced in the declaration made by God to Moses on a particular occasion,* "I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;" but this declaration contains nothing inconsistent with the idea that the Jews might not still be continued as the "peculiar people" of God—just as, for ages after it was made to Moses, they

* See Genesis xxxii., xxxiii.

continued to be recognised as such. We can conceive of the Jews objecting to the *truth* of the statement that they were on the "eve of being everlastingly cursed;" but we can hardly conceive of their admitting its truth, and at the same time disputing the rectitude and righteousness of it,—in other words, they can only be supposed to object to the *truth* of the doctrine, *because* it would be inconsistent with God's righteousness. This being obviously the case, it is clear that the reply, in order to be to *the point*, must have contained a *proof* that they were actually and truly "on the eve of being everlastingly cursed by God." But the reply of the apostle does not contain a particle of evidence on this subject. It speaks of mercy,—sovereign mercy, no doubt, but great and certain mercy, such mercy as would be worthy of God to exercise. True, it is only mercy to *some*—"on *whom* I will have mercy;" and this of course implies that on *others* vengeance, signal vengeance, would be executed. But as, on the occasion on which it was first uttered, this declaration did not imply that the Jews, as a nation, were about to be "everlastingly cursed," or entirely stripped of their theocratic honours and privileges,—so it could not be logically adduced by the apostle as a proof that a more overwhelming calamity was about to overtake them.

These remarks demonstrate, we submit, the untenableness of the interpretation adopted by the

author; and this is rendered still more evident by the mystification and inconsistency in which he is involved, when he attempts to give an exposition of the words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c. In regard to this passage, he remarks, that

"The apostle fetches his proof out of a passage of the Jewish Scriptures, which clearly shows that God claims to himself a right to deal with the Jews, on the very principle for which the apostle had been contending. Now, if the Jewish Scriptures themselves assert the very principle of procedure which the apostle contends will be exemplified in God's dealings with the Jews; and if these Scriptures confessedly guard and magnify the glorious righteousness of God, it necessarily follows that there cannot possibly be any discrepancy between that righteousness of God, and the apostle's doctrine."—p. 274.

This passage seems at first sight very plain, and withal very orthodox; but a closer inspection will show that it contains a complete jumble of ideas. We have, first, the "principle for which the apostle had been contending;" and this, if we are such simpletons, we are to regard as also the principle for which the *author* himself had been contending —although, as formerly shown, it is a very different one. We have, next, the "principle which the Jewish Scriptures assert," and assert in the passage quoted by the apostle; and this, it is alleged, is "the very principle" which was about to be "exemplified in God's dealings with the Jews." Now, according to the author, God was about "everlastingly to

curse" the Jews for their unbelief and impenitency: but the principle on which God punishes, or curses, is a principle of strict *justice*—whereas the principle asserted in the passage quoted by the apostle is one according to which God exercises "mercy" and "compassion;" and this he does on a principle of *sovereignty*—the "very principle for which," as we maintain, "the apostle has been contending." On what other principle but that of *sovereignty* was it that God chose Jacob and his seed, before they were born, and before they had "done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth?" And is it not precisely the same principle that is asserted in the words quoted by the apostle, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion?" The author admits that this "mercy" is "forgiving mercy," and that the "compassion" is "*pardoning* compassion;" and that God claims a right to bestow this mercy "on whom he will." In these words he says, "There is announced a high and unchallengeable determination to reserve in his own hands a *liberty* of making his forgiving grace terminate on what persons he pleases," p. 285. This undoubtedly is the principle which the scriptures assert. It is also the principle which we have been endeavouring to maintain. And surely it is a pleasant, though somewhat unexpected result, to find at last, that the

apostle, the author, and our humble selves, have all been contending for the very same "principle of procedure."

This, however, is too comfortable a state of matters to continue long. The author, after very properly remarking, that "God will actually have forgiving mercy, *not* on all such as may *desire to enjoy it*, nor on all those on whom holy but imperfect men, like Moses, might desire it to terminate; but on such, and on such only, as it may please himself to make its objects," proceeds to say,

> "We are not to suppose, indeed, in reference to God's procedure in general, or his special procedure in conferring forgiving mercy, that he will act in a principle-disregarding manner. Neither are we to suppose that he will act on a principle that is foolish, or unworthy, or unbenevolent, or that is calculated to encourage sin, or to discourage sinners out of woe from seeking everlasting salvation," p. 286.

Now, no one, we presume, imagines that God can, or will act "foolishly," or "unworthily," or "unbenevolently;" but it is quite possible that God may act in a way that *appears* so to some minds. "That which is highly esteemed among men," is often "abomination in the sight of God." "The wisdom of this world" is frequently "foolishness with God." The author, we suppose, means to insinuate that Calvinists attribute to God a manner of acting that is "unworthy," and "unbenevolent," if not "foolish;" and there can be no doubt that if *his* views of

the character of God be correct, this is the case. In *his* estimation, it would be unworthy of God to show *more* "love to one individual's soul" than to the "soul of another," p. 426. But the question is, Are these views correct? On this point, we make our appeal to facts—scriptural facts. In thus appealing, we are reasoning strictly on the principle of the inductive philosophy, which is the only approved and legitimate method of ratiocination on other topics. We point to the cases of Isaac and Jacob—We ask our readers to allow their mind's eye to take a sweep over the fields of inspiration, and to note, as it passes along, the meaning and gracious intent of those covenants, promises, oaths, declarations, reasonings, expostulations, predictions, miraculous and providential deliverances, angelic and prophetic ministrations, and peculiarly tender and endearing appellations, metaphors, and analogies, in which the great "love" of God for Israel was and is expressed; and if, after this survey, they can lift up their heads, and honestly declare, that they believe in the author's doctrine regarding the *equalness* to "all" of God's love, we shall be much surprised—their minds must be differently constituted from ours. We can only say, that till we read the author's work, we should have thought it a *moral impossibility* for any man to read over the history of God's actings towards Jacob and Esau, and their posterities, without coming to the conclu-

sion that God's love to the souls of the one people *did* "tower above" his love to the other peeple—in other words, that it was precisely of the kind indicated in the passage quoted by the apostle, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

But perhaps the author may be afraid that we are overlooking the chief gravamen of his implied charge, that Calvinism has a "sinner-discouraging" tendency and effect. On this point he says, that

> "God cannot act in a way calculated to *discourage sinners* from seeking everlasting salvation; for this would be to thwart and choke his own ineffably sincere and tender desire that '*all* men be saved;' it would be to refute, by his practice, the tear-mingled words of his most solemn profession, that he has 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked,'" p. 287.

Now, it would not be difficult to show that the Calvinistic system, more than any other, is fitted to encourage sinners to seek the salvation of their souls—especially such sinners as are truly convinced of their sinfulness, and of their utter inability to help themselves. As is remarked by Dr. Hodge, in reference to a kindred system to that of the author, "There is more *saving truth* in the parings of our doctrine than in his whole theory." * That system

* Diss. on the Extent of the Atonement, appended to *Paisley* edition of Hodge on the Romans, p. 464.

which teaches the sinner to look up to God and his grace for help and salvation, must be more fitted to encourage sinners, than one that bids him look to something *within* himself—where, if truly enlightened, he feels there "dwelleth no good thing." "He that trusteth in his heart is a fool." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is."

The author, however, may imagine that this defect of his system is more than counterbalanced by his representing God as cherishing an "ineffably sincere and tender desire that *all men be saved*." Now, we admit that there must be a sense in which it is true that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" but it must be a sense that is consistent with other scriptural facts and statements. It must be consistent, for example, with the facts regarding God's treatment of Ishmael and Esau, and their posterities. And that it cannot be true in the sense which is essential to the system of Arminianism, as contradistinguished from Calvinism, is evident from this, that the author has no sooner made the statement, than he himself finds it necessary to turn his back on it. He finds himself obliged to attempt to "thwart and choke" his own gracious utterance. Notwithstanding all that he says about "tear-bedewed words," and "*most* solemn professions," and "ineffably sincere and tender desires," he is obliged to confess

that there are some sinners to whom God is not "*heartily willing* to extend his pardoning mercy." Lest our readers should suspect us of straining or misquoting the author's words, we shall give the passage entire in which he makes this "sinner-discouraging" announcement:—

"We may certainly conclude, then, that when it is said that "God is forgivingly gracious," that it is clearly and theologically, though not exegetically implied, that he will be forgivingly gracious to all to *whom he can*, with consistency, and in wisdom, and with concurrent regard to the interest of the great universe, extend his pardoning mercy. He alone, however, is competent to say to whom he is thus *able*, and therefore to whom he is *heartily willing* to extend his pardoning mercy," p. 287.

Now, there is not, and cannot be, in the system of Calvinism, any thing more "sinner-discouraging" than this. To whom is the poor sinner to look for help, if God himself be not "able," and therefore not "heartily willing," that is, not willing at all, to help him? The author does not know—God alone knows—*how many* of the human race may be in this helpless plight. The vast majority of mankind, for any thing the author knows, may be in this melancholy condition.

The statement that God "*will* be forgivingly gracious to *all* to whom he *can*" be so, obviously implies that hitherto he *has* extended his "pardoning mercy" to all to whom he *could* do so. Now, as he did not extend even the *means* of grace and

salvation to the Ishmaelites and Edomites, and consequently did not bestow his pardoning mercy on them, except perhaps in some few instances,—the inference is irresistible, that he was not "able," and therefore not "heartily willing" to extend it to them. Now, if this be the case, for what purpose has the author compiled his learned "Exposition of the ninth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans?"

The author's doctrine on this subject may be considered, in one view of it, as having a sinner-*encouraging* aspect; and he no doubt intends this. But it happens in this case, as in some others, that extremes meet. For certainly the idea that there are persons—it may be millions on millions of them—to whom God is not "able" to extend his "pardoning mercy," is of an opposite character. And we are not aware that it has any countenance from Scripture. The author admits, that it is "*not* exegetically implied in the verse under consideration,—'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,'" &c. Assuredly it is not. The *opposite* is implied. God here claims a *right*, and that implies the *power*, to extend mercy to whom he *pleases* —"on whom *I will*." We object to the author's interpretation, therefore, because it thrusts a *necessitarian* idea on the language quoted by the apostle, which is assuredly *not* in the language, and *not* in harmony with the apostle's design in quoting it.

In scripture, God is represented as "*able* to save to the *uttermost*," and "*mighty* to save." Besides, there would be an obvious and palpable absurdity in supposing, (according to the author's theory,) that God is *willing* that "all men be saved," if he be not really "able" to save all.

Farther—the author says, that "the star of the verse before us *hides* its cheering rays only from anti-Messianic desperadoes." Now, here again the author takes a more "limited" and "restricted" view of the grace of God than we do. We maintain that the "star of this verse" *does not* "hide its cheering rays" from *any class* of sinners—no, not even from the "*chief* of sinners." The apostle Paul himself is a bright example in point of an "anti-Messianic desperado" to whom God "extended his pardoning mercy;" and that, too, even when he was "dashing onward with recklessness towards the rifted rocks of everlasting reprobation." And his is not a solitary case. Let no one, therefore, despair. The *sovereignty* of divine grace has often been illustrated by God's extending his mercy to the *vilest* of men, and withholding it from the outwardly decent and comparatively moral. Thus it is that "publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God," while the self-righteous are cast out.

The author intimates that, "so far as concerns the bestowment of pardon for eternity, it is *faith in*

the Messiah that is the *key* by which we are to unlock the reference of the indeterminate expression, 'I will have mercy on *whomsoever I choose* to have mercy,'" p. 288. Now, it is true, in regard to adults, that "it is *they who believe in the Messiah*," and they alone, on whom God chooses to confer forgiveness. But this, we submit, is *not* the "key" that unlocks the "reference" of the expression referred to. In the first place, only a comparatively small number of the human family have ever heard of the Messiah, and consequently have had no opportunity of believing on him. The author himself admits, p. 293, that, in order to salvation, it is "*necessary* to have a *knowledge* of God's appointed way" of obtaining it. But how few, comparatively, possess this "necessary knowledge." This knowledge was not communicated to the Ishmaelites, nor to the Edomites, and other nations, as it was communicated to the Israelites; and it is for the author to reconcile this fact with his doctrine, that God's love is "equal to all," and that he desired to give "all men" identically the same "ultimate destiny." He cannot deny that, in the dispensation of this "necessary knowledge," God has exercised a right of *sovereignty*—bestowing it "on whom he would, and withholding it from whom he would." The above *key*, therefore, goes but a small way in enabling us to *unlock* this "mystery of God's purpose." In the second place, this *key* does not ena-

ble us to determine *who* shall believe, or *to whom* this "grace" shall be "given," Phil. i. 29. We might as well say that *regeneration* is the key by which we are to unlock this mystery, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But this leaves us entirely in the dark as to *who* shall be regenerated. Does not the Holy Spirit bestow this blessing on the same principle of *sovereignty*, as that on which God bestows his pardoning mercy—"on whom he wills?" "The wind bloweth *where* it listeth (or *pleaseth*): so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8.

When God says, "I will have mercy and compassion *on whom I will*"—this language implies that he reserves *exclusively* in his own hands, and claims as one of his prerogatives, the sole right and power to bestow or withhold, not only mercy, but the *means* of obtaining it, and every thing essentially connected therewith. It would obviously be inconsistent with the high claim of exclusive and undivided sovereignty which this language implies, to suppose that any creature had the *power* to obtain that which God reserves in his own hands. Accordingly, faith itself—to which the promise of pardoning mercy is attached—is spoken of as a "grace" that is "given," Phil. i. 29. It is expressly said to be the "gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. It is mentioned as one of the "fruits of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22. And Paul says to the Philippians, it

is "God who *worketh* in you both *to will* and *to do* of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12.

The doctrine, that "faith" is "of the *operation of God*," Col. ii. 12; and that we are "chosen" by God to faith, as well as to holiness and salvation, is exceedingly distasteful to the author; and no wonder,—it is fatal to one of the leading tenets of his system. In a note, at the end of his work, he sets himself to reply to the powerful reasoning of Dr. Owen on this point. We presume he was ambitious of breaking a lance with this champion of Calvinism. Dr. Owen appeals to Eph. i. 4, in proof of his position, that "faith is a fruit of our election,"—or, in other words, that we are chosen *to* faith,—"According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we *should be holy*, and without blame before Him in love."—"We are chosen," says the Dr., "that we should be holy,—of which holiness, faith, purifying the heart, is a *principal share*."* In reply to this, the author favours us with the following remarkable illustration of his logical prowess.

"If faith be a 'principal share' of holiness, it will follow that "a sinner, in being justified through faith, is justified through "holiness; and where, then, will be the doctrine of salvation by "grace? But further, holiness is obedience to the moral law;

* Death of Death, &c., Edinburgh Edition, 1845, p. 145.

"and if, therefore, faith be a 'principal share' of it, it must be "by the law, and the deeds of the law, notwithstanding all that "Paul has written, that we are to be justified. Holiness in sin- "ners, moreover, is sanctification: and if, then, faith be a 'prin- "cipal share' of it, it will follow, that being justified by faith, we "are justified by sanctification. But, again, faith, as the Dr. "reminds us, purifieth the heart, *i. e.*, sanctifieth the heart; and "so, if faith be a 'principal share' of holiness, it will follow that "faith, *i. e.*, sanctification, produceth sanctification, a 'principal "share' of which is faith, *i. e.*, produceth itself, *i. e.*, is both its "own cause and effect. But as these consectaries are neither "very reasonable, nor evangelical, it is to be feared that the "Dr.'s discovery of *election* TO *faith* in Eph. i. 4, must be aban- "doned by his followers."—p. 555.

The attentive reader cannot fail to perceive, that the *first* thing to be attended to, in the reasoning of Dr. Owen, is his allegation, that "faith is a principal share of holiness." If this statement be true and scriptural, then there *must* be some way of reconciling it with the "doctrine of salvation by grace;" and in this case, the author is equally bound with Dr. Owen to find out the reconciling principle. He doubtless, however, found it "more convenient" to *assume* that faith is *not* a "principal share of holiness;" and perhaps expected that his readers would be "soft" enough to take it for granted. Let us see how the matter stands. The author tells us that "holiness is obedience to the moral law." Well, can there be this "obedience" without faith? Is not faith an essential part of obedience? "This is His commandment, that we should believe

on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John iii. 23. "This is the will of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent," John vi. 29. A more comprehensive definition of holiness is, that it consists in "conformity to the will of God." Now, there can be no such conformity without faith. This is self-evident. Conformity to the will of God implies a knowledge of, and a cordial acquiescence in His will. Faith thus forms an essential element in every part of holiness,—in every act of obedience,—in every act of worship, and in every feeling of devotion. Accordingly we read, that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God *must believe* that He is," Heb. xi. 6. The author cannot deny that "the *chief* end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." Now, we cannot possibly glorify God, unless we believe on Him. Hence we read, that Abraham was "strong in faith, *giving glory* to God," Rom. iv. 20. It is thus evident that "faith *is* a principal share of holiness."

But then, it may be asked, What becomes of the "doctrine of salvation by grace?" This, we admit, is a very *natural* objection to come from a Morisonian, but it could hardly occur to the mind of a Calvinist, or to any one whose theology coincided with that of the apostle Paul. "By the *grace of God*, I am what I am,—I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the *grace of God* which was

with me," 1 Cor. xv. 10. A Bible-instructed Christian knows that he *is nothing*, and *has nothing*, but what he has received; and that it is "God who worketh in him both *to will* and *to do* of His good pleasure." He has nothing, therefore, of which to glory, or that can form a ground of justification in the sight of God.

The author says, "If faith be a principal share of holiness, it will follow that a sinner, in being justified through faith, is justified through holiness," or through the "deeds of the law." But this consectary does not follow. What logically follows, is, that a sinner is justified through faith, which faith forms an element in, or a "principal share" of, holiness. And is not this a scriptural conclusion? Does the author need to be instructed that there is a sense in which it is true, that "*by works* a man is justified, and not by faith only," James ii. 24. "Faith, *if it hath not works*, is dead, being alone." This is a conclusive proof that "faith is a *principal share* of holiness." Faith is *dead*, or is no faith at all, "if it hath not *holiness*." True faith is a plant of heavenly origin, and wherever it takes root, it bears fruit indicative of its high origin. We are not saved or justified *because* of our works; but we are saved by or through a faith that produces good works,—in other words, by a faith which is so interwoven with holiness, as to form a "principal share" of it.

The author winds up his climax of absurdities thus:—"Faith, as the Dr. reminds us, purifieth the heart, *i. e.*, sanctifieth the heart; and so, if faith be a principal share of holiness, it will follow that faith, *i. e.*, sanctification, produceth sanctification, a principal share of which is faith, *i. e.*, produceth itself, *i. e.*, is both its own cause and effect." The author is kind enough to inform us that these "consectaries" are not "very reasonable," and we entirely agree with him in this. The question is, who is responsible for them? and the answer is, Himself,—assuredly not Dr. Owen. It *does not* follow that because faith sanctifies or purifies the heart, and is thus an element in, or a principal share of, sanctification, therefore *it is* sanctification. A principal share of anything is not *the thing* itself. Nitrogen is a principal share of the air we breathe; but nitrogen is not the air itself. Nitrogen, when combined with oxygen, and a small quantity of carbonic acid gas, produces wholesome air; but does it follow from this, that it is both its own cause and effect? The author may perpetrate as many illogical consectaries as he pleases; but to fasten to them the venerable name of Dr. Owen is a heinous offence.

The conclusion of Dr. Owen, from Eph. i. 4, would be equally valid, if we suppose—what must be allowed—that faith is *essentially* connected with holiness, though not a "share" of it. There can be no holiness without faith. This is undeniable.

The inference is, therefore, irresistible, that the Ephesians, in being chosen *to* holiness, or that they "should be holy," were chosen *to* faith. The author, in reply to Dr. Payne of Exeter, says, the statement that the Ephesians were "chosen that they should be holy," is a "totally-different statement" from one to this effect, "they were chosen that they *should believe*, and that they *should be holy*." Now, if faith and holiness be essentially and indissolubly connected—if the one cannot exist without the other—the two statements are only different in form or fulness, and not in reality. If an election *to* faith secures holiness, and an election *to* holiness secures faith, it is plain that the two statements are convertible, and that the one involves the other.

The same remarks apply to 2 Thess. ii. 13, where it is said that "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you *to* salvation *through* sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." In this passage, "salvation" is in the position occupied by "holiness," in Eph. i. 4—while sanctification *and* faith are represented as having the same relative position to election—thus indicating that salvation, holiness, and faith, are inseparably connected—they form a "three-fold cord which *cannot* be broken." No one can be saved who is not sanctified or regenerated by the Spirit, and who does not believe. Consequently, to be "chosen *to* salvation," includes

faith and sanctification. The three blessings are linked together by a bond that is indissoluble.

Let us now take a hasty glance at the 16th, being the last verse of the section of the chapter now under consideration—"So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." The inferential phrase, "so, then," with which this verse is introduced, shows plainly that what follows is to be regarded as a corollary from what goes before. It matters not whether we suppose this conclusion to be deduced from the various statements and reasonings of the previous context, or from the declaration contained in the immediately preceding verse; because that verse contains within itself the basis-principle of all that went before, and of those dispensations of God to which the apostle has referred. It contains an announcement, by God himself, of his exclusive right to bestow forgiving mercy and compassion on whomsoever he pleases. Now, if this be the case, —if God reserves, in his own hands, the bestowment of salvation, or pardoning mercy, the conclusion of the apostle is self-evident, that this blessing is not obtainable by any thing that man *can do*—it is something beyond his power—it is not to be obtained by *his* will, or wishes, or running, or exertions of any kind. "It is not of (or in) him that willeth, or of him that runneth." "If," says Dr. Hodge,

"the ground of the decision or choice of the objects of mercy be *in God*, as is asserted in verse 15, then that it is not *in man* is a conclusion which flows of course from the previous declaration."*

It is of importance to the right understanding of the 16th verse, that we have a clear and distinct conception of the apostle's design or object in the previous context. If we overlook or misapprehend this design, we shall fail to perceive the full force and appropriateness of the conclusion. That the apostle is not discussing the way by which a sinner, on his part, becomes interested in the pardoning mercy of God, is evident. Had this been his object, his conclusion would have been different. In this case, if he had adverted at all to the insufficiency of "willing" and "running" to obtain salvation, he would not, most assuredly, have concluded without telling us *what* was sufficient, or *how* we were to be saved, namely, by faith in the Lord Jesus. This is a theme to which the apostle frequently refers, and dwells on with evident delight and satisfaction. Statements to this effect, the author says truly, "swarm for multitude" in his writings. The fact that he says nothing on this point here, or in the immediate context, is conclusive proof that he had a different object in view. The author says,

* Hodge on the Romans, p. 277.—Paisley Edition.

"He (that is, God) gives his pardoning mercy freely and generously, and fully, on the one hand, to all *who believe* in the propitiation of his Son; but, on the other hand, he refuses to confer one atom of it upon self-reprobating rebels, who will *not believe* in the propitiation of the Lord who bought them."—p. 297.

Now this is a true statement, and an important truth; but that it is not *the truth* to which the apostle is directing attention is plain. It is not embodied in his conclusion. The author himself admits, that it is not stated "here," nor in the "verses that go immediately before," nor "in the verses that follow immediately after." Undoubtedly, therefore, this is not *the point* which the apostle has in view.

Nor is the apostle adverting to the necessity of running *in haste*, or running *to the end*, in opposition to the running of those who *halt*, or who *turn back*. Neither is he discussing the importance of running only in the *right* way, as contrasted with running in a *wrong* way. On this point, the author says that

"There is but *one way*" to the blessing of forgiveness—"and except the sinner run in it, he will only run farther and farther away from the goal which it is his desire to reach. *Jesus is the way.* He that would get pardoning mercy and forgiving compassion, must run and run with haste *by him* to God, and then, and then only, will he be blessed to the fulness of his heart's desires."—p. 296.

Undoubtedly there is a sense in which all this is

true; but it is plainly not *the truth* which the apostle is here teaching. This is only a wheel within the larger wheel around which the thoughts of the apostle are revolving. The apostle does not say, "It is not of him that runneth in a wrong path, but it is of him that runneth in the right way." No—all the running, and any running that man *can* do is nothing, unless it please God to give the blessing. It is "of Him" solely and exclusively. Jacob was not even running in the *right* path, when he obtained the blessing. Paul was running madly and impetuously in the *wrong* way, when the mercy of God overtook him. In these cases, we are furnished with clear examples and illustrations of the truth of the apostle's doctrine, that "it is not of him that runneth, but *of God* that showeth mercy."

What, then, is the point or doctrine which the apostle is seeking to establish? We apprehend that it is the same as that announced by our Lord in the words: "No man *can come* to me, except the Father *draw* him;" and again, "No man *can come* unto me except it were *given* unto him of my Father," John vi. 44, 65. If we look back to the preceding context of the passage under consideration—to the cases of Isaac and Ishmael, of Jacob and Esau; and read over these cases, in the light reflected on them by the 15th and 16th verses—the meaning of the apostle will be transparent. Who, or what was it that made Isaac to "differ" from

Ishmael, or Jacob from Esau, or the Israelites from the Edomites? The answer is contained in this 16th verse—"It is *of God* that showeth mercy." No other answer than this *can* be given—"even our enemies themselves being judges." The mercy or favour by which Isaac and Jacob were distinguished was declared to belong to them even before they were born, or had "done any good or evil;" and in the latter case, it is expressly said to be the result of the "purpose of God according to election," and hence "not *of works*, but *of Him* that calleth," that is, "of God that showeth mercy." These cases thus illustrate and confirm the truth of the apostle's doctrine—or rather, that doctrine is the legitimate and irrefragable conclusion deduced from these cases.

Now, this conclusion has an obvious and important bearing on the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism. The cardinal point of difference between these two systems, as formerly remarked, is "Whether the reason why one man is saved and another not, is owing to the grace of God, or to the free will of man?"* Let us put this difference into the form of a question—"Is it of the free will of man, or of God, that pardoning mercy, or salvation, is obtained?" and ask our readers to answer it in the light of the apostle's reasoning and conclusion.

* Dr. Alexander, of America.

We would put this question to the author himself; and we can hardly persuade ourselves that his answer will not be in accordance with the sentiments we have indicated.

We go on to the consideration of the next section of the chapter—namely, verses 17, 18,—"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

The general bearing and import of this passage is obvious; though there may be some difficulty in explaining the exact and genuine meaning of its phraseology. The particle "for," which stands at its entrance, connects it with the 14th verse. In that verse the apostle forcibly denies that there was, in the statements he had advanced, any thing inconsistent with the "righteousness of God;" and he confirms this denial by an appeal to two Old Testament declarations—"*For* he saith to Moses," and "*For* the scripture saith to Pharaoh." The passage thus bears the relation of a second, or twin reason to the one contained in verse 15; while the conclusion deduced from it, and contained in ver. 16, corresponds to the conclusion in verse 18, deduced from the second reason. In the 15th verse

the apostle shows that the Lord claims a right *to extend* his pardoning mercy to whomsoever he pleases. In the 18th verse he shows that God claims the right to *withhold* it from whom he pleases. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the phrase, "Whom he will he *hardeneth*," it plainly and undeniably *includes* the idea of *mercy withheld*. This idea forms the basis-thought of the passage.

The author devotes to the consideration of this section of the chapter a very long and able lecture. It contains many acute and critical observations; though his exposition, as a whole, does not commend itself to our approval. He expends a considerable part of his strength in determining the meaning of the expression rendered, "I have *raised* thee *up*" *—which he interprets to mean, "I have raised thee up (from thy bed of sickness)—that is, I have restored thee to health." We are unable, however, to perceive any sound philological or exegetical reason for limiting the expression to this idea. If it had been really the case, indeed, that Pharaoh was sick, and sick unto death, then his restoration to health would have been necessary, in order that the purpose of God respecting him might be accomplished. But there does not appear to us sufficient evidence for the conclusion that he was

* Ἐξήγειρά σε.

sick, at least to the extent which this interpretation would imply. True, the plague of boils and blains was upon "*all* the Egyptians;" but this may simply mean that it was almost universally, or *very generally* upon them. We find that Pharaoh did not manifest any relenting in consequence of this plague, as he did from some of the others. But if he had been grievously afflicted with it (as this interpretation supposes), he could hardly have failed to have relented somewhat under its infliction.

We incline, therefore, to the opinion of those expositors who consider the expression to mean, "I have raised thee up to the throne of Egypt, and to thy present elevated and conspicuous position." This interpretation agrees well with the purpose of God respecting him—"That I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." This "purpose" would not have been subserved, had Pharaoh been a private individual, or even a king over some less distinguished people. It is no valid objection to this interpretation, that the phrase in question "is not a *technical term* to designate *exaltation to royalty*." Who ever thinks of constantly using technical terms? The author himself cultivates his taste and fancy by varying his phraseology; and why not allow the same liberty to the apostle. The author says, that God "*raised up* Moses" to be the "leader" of the Hebrews—thus using precisely in

the sense contended for, the very term which our translators have employed in rendering the expression referred to.

The "purpose" of God in "raising up" Pharaoh to the throne of Egypt, and preserving him for a time in that elevated position, calls for special notice. This purpose is expressly declared by God to be, "*that* I might show my power in thee, and *that* my name might be declared throughout all the earth." The best exposition of this passage is to be found in the history of God's dealings with the infatuated monarch of Egypt. There we find that God over-ruled the hard-heartedness of Pharaoh for the manifestation of his glory and power. The repeated refusals of the haughty Potentate to allow Israel to go, were made the occasion by God to multiply his "signs and wonders in the land of Ham;" and in this way God's glorious name was spread abroad "throughout all the earth." This last expression clearly indicates the high position to which Egypt had attained among the nations. It stood at the head of the civilised world; and hence every thing remarkable done in it was sure to spread far and wide among the surrounding tribes. Thus, the Lord "gat him a name," an "everlasting name," a "glorious name." He "brought forth his people Israel out of the land of Egypt with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with great terror," Jer. xxxii. 21. These facts,

taken in connexion with the conclusion deduced from them by the Apostle in ver. 18,—"Therefore, whom he will he hardeneth,"—shew clearly that God's "purpose" towards Pharaoh and his people was not exactly a purpose of *mercy*. God's treatment of Pharaoh furnishes the apostle with an instance in which God did *not* extend his forgiving mercy. True, there was an element of mercy in all God's dealings with Pharaoh; but it was not mercy to him, but to the people of Israel, and in some respects, no doubt, to the surrounding nations, and to such of the Egyptians as were spared. These dispensations were like "the pillar of the cloud" which stood "between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel,"—it was a "cloud and darkness" to the one people; but it gave "light by night" to the other, Exod. xiii. 20.

This simple and obvious view of the passage, however, does not square with the system of the author. It does not exactly coincide with his doctrine—namely, that God's love is "*equal* to all;" and of course that it must have been as *great* to the Egyptians as to the Israelites. Hence, some other method of interpretation must be fished up out of the miry waters of verbal criticism. The author accordingly persuades himself, and tries to persuade his readers, that the purpose of God referred to, was a "reduplicative purpose"—that is, a double purpose—First, a purpose of mercy, and

then a "solemn alternative," or a purpose of judgment. God's purpose to show his power in Pharaoh, he interprets to mean a purpose of mercy—the object of it, and the "foremost desire of God's heart," being the "conviction and conversion" of Pharaoh; while the "latter part of the reduplicative purpose of God"—namely, "that my name might be declared throughout all the earth"—the author interprets to mean a purpose of judgment. "It is evident," he says, "that there is *something dreadful* latently couched under these words." Now, really, we must be excused for saying, that all this appears to us very strange. We are perfectly unable to see any thing peculiarly "dreadful" in the one expression as compared with the other. In our humble apprehension, the case is exactly the *reverse* of what the author alleges. There is "something dreadful," the author himself being judge, "in exhibitions of tremendous power," such as the plagues inflicted on Pharaoh, "more especially when these come home to one's own person and substance, and subjects or friends," p. 326. The "name" of God, on the other hand, does not imply any thing so terrific. The author reminds us that God is "love," as well as "light." "He is glorious in holiness, a sin-hating and unbelief-avenging God; and yet he is twice-glorious in love, a sinner-compassionating and a Messiah-providing God," p. 331. Such is the author's own definition of the name of God; and

how then comes he to imagine that there should be any thing "dreadful" couched in the purpose of God to have his "name" proclaimed far and wide?

God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh is expressly stated to be, that his "name might be declared throughout all the earth;" and it is one of the plainest things imaginable, that this—the *result* contemplated—was accomplished by *means* of those displays of power—those "signs and wonders" which God wrought in Egypt,—including, of course, the final catastrophe which befel Pharaoh and his army. The author, however, by interpreting the clause, "that I might show my power in thee," to mean a purpose of mercy, is shut up to the necessity of *limiting* the application of the next clause, "and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth," to the destruction of the Egyptians in the waters of the Red Sea. But this is obviously absurd. Why, though Pharaoh had repented at the last, and thus saved himself from a watery grave, sufficient displays of the power of God had been given, to ensure the declaration of His glorious name throughout the earth.

According to the author, "the full exegetical import" of the passage is this,—"For this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and, *failing thy conviction and conversion*, that my name might bē declared throughout

all the earth.—In vindication of this rather important *addition* to the words of Scripture, he remarks,

"The intervenience of such a conditional complement of thought is exceedingly common in the announcement of the purposes of God. Thus, when Jonah was commissioned to proclaim in Nineveh, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,' the full import of the proclamation evidently is, 'Yet forty days, and, *failing the repentance of the Ninevites*, Nineveh shall be overthrown.'—In our Saviour's declaration, moreover, of the great evangelical purpose of God, 'He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned,' the full meaning of the latter clause, at least, evidently is, "He that believeth not, shall, *provided he persist in his unbelief, and refuse to turn from it*, be damned."—p. 329.

Now, it is plain that the case of the Ninevites is not a parallel case to that of Pharaoh. We know from the result, what was the import of Jonah's message to the people of Nineveh. It was rather a warning, or conditional threatening, than a purpose of immediate judgment. We are not to suppose that the *entire* preaching of Jonah was limited to the iteration of the words, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." These words merely express the *substance* of the prophet's message. The apostles of our Lord did not limit *their* preaching to a mere repetition of the words referred to above. In Pharaoh's case, it was declared *beforehand* to Moses by God himself, "I am *sure* that the king of Egypt will not let you go, but by a strong hand." The insertion of any "conditional

complement of thought" is, therefore, inadmissible. We doubt much if the author be able to adduce from Scripture, a case admitting of the "complement" suggested, and yet, in other respects, analogous to that of Pharaoh, in which the determinate purpose of God is so expressly declared, and declared in terms that utterly preclude the idea of contingency:—Gen. iv. 21, "And the Lord said unto Moses, when thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh; *but I will harden his heart*, THAT *he shall not let the people go*." Here the performance of those "wonders" by which the power of God was to be shown to Pharaoh, is accompanied with the declaration of a purpose; but it is not a purpose of mercy:—"but I will *harden* his heart." We shall afterwards have occasion to advert to the import of this "hardening:" at present, we merely refer to it to show that it forms a link in that chain of events by which the unfrustrable purposes of God were to be accomplished. It is plain, that no such declaration as this was made to Jonah. Had such a thing happened, that prophet would not have had occasion to say, "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil," Jonah iv. 2.

There is obviously no analogy between the gospel message referred to by the author, and the declared

purpose of God in Pharaoh's case. The "conditional" element is expressly embodied in the declaration of the gospel: it therefore requires no "complement" to bring out its "full meaning."

But to proceed. According to the author, "the means that God purposed to employ, failing the conviction and conversion of Pharaoh, to have his nature and character declared throughout the earth," was "the *tragical death* of the indomitably unbelieving monarch, in the Red Sea." But this suggests another question, namely, "what method did God purpose to adopt, to secure this 'tragical death'"? And the answer which the author gives to this question, is, that "the Lord *hardened* the heart of Pharaoh;" and this, he adds, "is most evidently *the very thing he purposed to do*, failing his conviction and conversion."—p. 333.

This interpretation supposes that God's purpose to have his "name declared throughout all the earth," depended *solely* on the "tragical death" of Pharaoh: but this, as already shown, is an untenable hypothesis.—Again, this interpretation supposes that the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart was an "alternative purpose," and was exclusively connected with the last scene in the eventful life of Pharaoh. Now, it is plain, from the facts of the case, and from the passage of Scripture already quoted, (Gen. iv. 21,) that the "hardening" process commenced with, and was continued during, the whole

of those transactions in which Moses and Pharaoh acted so conspicuous a part, "But I will harden his heart, *that* he shall not let the people go."

But what are we to understand by God *hardening* the heart of Pharaoh? This is an important question: and on various accounts, it is necessary to give it an answer. The subject naturally divides itself into two branches:—1. The *nature* of the hardening; and 2. The *agency* of God in effecting it. With regard to the first point, it is plain, we apprehend, that the hardening consists in *insensibility to duty*,—the duty, to wit, of allowing the Israelites to depart. Hardness of heart may certainly mean *insensibility to danger*, or a stoical indifference to suffering. This is the sense to which the author and some other Arminians incline; but it is obviously untenable. It is only necessary to read over the history of God's dealings with Pharaoh, to be convinced of this. The passage of Scripture already referred to shows this clearly. "But I will *harden his heart*, THAT he shall not let the people go." Here the result or effect of the hardening is declared to be, "that he (Pharaoh) *shall not let the people go*." This seems decisive of the point, and it is of importance to have a clear understanding of this, because the consideration of it will assist in determining and regulating our views of the agency of God in effecting it. If the "hardening" consists in *indifference to duty*, it is impossible that God

can be, in any just and proper sense, the cause or instigator of it. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." But, it may be asked, Is it not expressly declared by God himself, "I *will* harden his heart?" True, but this must be understood in a manner descriptive of the *result;* just as it might be said that the sun, when its beams are withdrawn, is the cause of cold or frost. Thus, Christ says, Mat. x. 35, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," &c.—that is, such will be the *result* of my coming. God withheld from the monarch of Egypt those gracious influences of his Holy Spirit which would have *softened* his heart; and the inevitable consequences of this withholding of the Spirit, was the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. This exposition of the hardening satisfactorily accounts for all the facts of the case, and for the phraseology used in reference to it; and it leaves unimpeachable the character of God, as to any active or actual participation in the hardening process. God is not *bound* to give his Holy Spirit to all men, or to any man; just as he is not bound to give his holy word to all men. Pharaoh was simply, in this respect, and speaking comparatively, let alone, as the heathen generally are; and the consequence was, and is, "hardenedness" of heart to a fearful extent.

That this interpretation fully accounts for the facts of the case, is evident from the account which the apostle gives of the results arising from the enjoyment of the Spirit, and from the want of his gracious influences: Gal. v. 19—22, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," &c.

The "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart is supposed, by some eminent expositors, to be a "punitive act," and to be an instance of that judicial abandonment, or giving over to a "reprobate mind," referred to by the apostle, in the first chapter of the epistle, (Rom. i. 24—28); and there can be no doubt that, on *this* ground, God sometimes hardens the hearts of heinous transgressors. We doubt, however, if the case of Pharaoh be an instance of this kind. It is plain, from the general conclusion deduced by the apostle from the case, that it was an act of *sovereignty*—"Whom he will he hardeneth." The idea that it consisted simply in grace or mercy withheld, accords well with this view of the subject;

and this idea of it, moreover, forms an exact and fitting correlate to the other part of the sentence—"Therefore, (or, So then) hath he mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth," that is, he withholds the mercy and grace of the Holy Spirit from them.

In reference to substantially the interpretation thus given of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, the author objects, and asks,

"Is it not an idea utterly and most mercilessly irreconcilable with those numerous passages of Holy Scripture which proclaim, with open mouth, that the propitiation of Jesus is for the "sins of the whole world," yea, for the sins of even those "who deny him, and bring upon themselves swift destruction?" Is it not equally irreconcilable with all those other passages which, with a loud tongue, announce that the influence of the Divine Spirit is like "the wind" that "lists" to blow everywhere, being an influence that is poured out upon "all flesh," and that is bearing in upon "the world?" And does it not, moreover, lift up its hand to put a slur upon the tender mercy and the very justice of our God, by representing him as entirely "passing by," in the dispensation of his mercies, all those millions of earth's reprobates, whom, nevertheless—as though he did compassionate them, and actually desire their faith, repentance, and salvation—he calls, commands, and urges, and entreats to believe, repent, and be saved?"—p. 337.

Now, all this is merely saying that the interpretation is at variance with *Morisonianism*, and with what the author understands to be the meaning of the passages of Scripture referred to; but this, we do not deem an objection of much weight. It is not

easy to see, however, that it is really inconsistent with the author's doctrine, that the "propitiation of Jesus" is for the sins of those who *perish*. If this "propitiation" does not effect or secure the salvation of those for whom it is made, what does it do for them? If it does not secure for them even the means of salvation; or even a knowledge of the fact that a propitiation has been provided—what is there unreasonable in supposing that it has not procured for them the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit? If, on the other hand, the "propitiation of Jesus" *certainly* secures the salvation of ALL for whom it is made, then it will follow that it was not made for Pharaoh; and this accords exactly with all the facts of the case, and with the interpretation contended for. Besides, it is plain that this interpretation does not impinge on the doctrine of the propitiation more than does that of the author, for he admits that, at last, God did "harden" the heart of Pharaoh, for the purpose of effecting his destruction; and this implies something at least equivalent to a withholding of the Spirit.—Moreover, the author's own interpretation involves the conclusion that the "propitiation of Jesus" is not for the "chief of sinners," nor even for such a great sinner as was Pharaoh; and if so, not for the sins of all men. When Pharaoh's sins had reached a certain height, and when he was "*most* unfit to die," instead of having the doctrine of the propitiation preached to him, he

was, according to the author, "hardened" by God, and thus hastened on to his destruction.

The author is obviously guilty of a palpable misrepresentation in intimating that there are passages of Scripture which "announce, with a loud tongue," that the "influence of the Divine Spirit is like the wind which lists to *blow everywhere*." There is no such statement in the Bible; and of course, to speak of "*all* those passages" which announce it, is something worse than nonsense. Our Lord says, "The wind bloweth *where* it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell *whence* it cometh, and *whither* it goeth," John iii. 8. The author, however, it seems *can tell* where it goes. It is almost unnecessary to remark, that the wind only blows *occasionally;* and in this respect, the special influence of the Spirit is likened unto it—"So is every one that is born of the Spirit." But even though we were to admit,—what, to some extent is generally allowed—that the influence of the Spirit is universally diffused; this would not much avail the author, unless he could also show that this influence is *equally* diffused among all. But this, we should think, he will hardly venture to maintain. Is every child "*filled* with the Holy Ghost, from its mother's womb?" Assuredly not. But if this divine influence is bestowed in different proportions, as the Spirit "lists" or likes to give it —if a large measure of it is given to the elect, or

to those who believe, while only a small or inefficient amount of it is bestowed on others, what does the author gain by this for his hypothesis? It may be admitted, for example, that as large an amount of it was enjoyed by Pharaoh as is enjoyed by the Thugs of India, or any other tribe of savages; but what does this avail them? What did it avail Pharaoh? and what does the admission of it avail the author and his system? As he maintains that God's love is "equal" to all, and his desire for the salvation of all "most impartial" to each individual of the human family; he ought to be able to prove that all enjoy the Spirit in the *same* abundant measure; and not only so, but that all enjoy the same pure and copious supply of the means of grace and salvation. The mere statement of these things, however, is a sufficient refutation of them.

The author also alleges that this interpretation "lifts up its hand to put a slur upon the tender mercy and the very justice of *our* God." It may be so, but we cannot help it. The question is, Does it cast any slur upon the character of the God of the Bible? We trow it does not. Nothing is more common than for errorists to imagine a character for God suitable to their own views and conceptions of things; and then to cry out against any different representation of Him, however scriptural, that it is derogatory to the mercy and justice of God.

Any exposition which involves the doctrine that God hath showed more "love," or "grace," or "kindness" to the souls of one class of men, than to the souls of another, impinges on the character which the author and his friends have formed of God. But do their views coincide with those of Scripture? This is the point. In the passage under consideration, the apostle expressly states that God "hath mercy *on whom he will*," and "*whom he will* he hardeneth." This language clearly indicates that there can be nothing inconsistent with God's mercy and justice in "entirely passing by the millions of earth's reprobates." Indeed, this is not a matter about which there can be two opinions among reasonable men. It is a matter of fact—stubborn fact. In accordance with this fact Paul told the people of Lystra, that God had, "in times past, *suffered* all nations to walk in their *own ways*," (Acts xiv. 16); and, again, addressing the "men of Athens," he said, "the times of this ignorance God *winked* at," (xvii. 30)—expressions nearly equivalent to the one referred to by the author. These passages embody the very sentiment to which the author objects as inconsistent with the mercy of God. They show that, for ages, God "passed by," in the dispensation of his spiritual mercies, the great mass of mankind—he "suffered *all nations* to walk in their *own* ways."

But we suppose the sting of the objection lies in

the allegation, that while God is represented as "entirely passing by the millions of earth's reprobates," he yet, "nevertheless, as though he did compassionate them, and actually desire their faith, repentance, and salvation," entreats them to "believe and be saved." But it is obvious that the author is here guilty of misrepresentation. It is not true, in point of fact, that the "millions of earth's reprobates" have been "called, commanded, urged, and entreated to believe, repent, and be saved." This is all *necessary* to the consistent and harmonious development of the author's system; and how he is able to reconcile the fact that millions have never even heard of the gospel, with the "tender mercy" of *his* God, and with his desire to give all men *identically* the same ultimate destiny, we are at a loss to imagine.

It is true, however, and we have no wish to disguise the fact, that there are, and have been, "millions of reprobates," whom God has, by his servants, commanded and entreated to "believe, repent, and be saved;" and to whom, nevertheless, effectual grace has not been vouchsafed. This fact is precisely what is announced by our Lord in the memorable words, "Many are *called*, but few are *chosen*." The fact itself, therefore, is undeniable; but we do not see that we are required to remove every difficulty which a captious mind may suggest regarding it. All that can fairly be asked of us is

to show that the facts of the case are such as we have represented them; for if so, they *must* be capable of a satisfactory explanation, though we may be unable to furnish the proper solution. The apostle Paul does not attempt to solve every difficulty that comes in his way. In the context of the passage under consideration, he silences an objector by simply asking him, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" ver. 20. And our Lord himself refers, as we believe, to this very objection, in terms so remarkable as to call for special notice—Matt. xi. 25—27, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast *hid* these things from the wise and prudent, and hast *revealed* them unto babes. *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son *will reveal* him." This passage clearly shows that the facts of the case are as we have indicated; and not only so, but that this is to be resolved into the *sovereignty* of God, which of course implies that it is a matter beyond the reach of human thought, and that cannot be explained. The language of our Lord and that of his honoured apostle coincide remarkably on this point. "On *whom he will* he hath mercy, and *whom he will* he hardeneth."

"Even so, Father, for so *it seemeth good in thy sight.*" It was a matter of rejoicing and thankfulness to the benevolent heart of the Saviour, that the mercy of God had been "revealed unto babes," though it had been "hid," that is, *had not been revealed* unto "the wise and prudent." In like manner, we ought to rejoice and thank God whenever we hear of any one to whom God has "*granted* repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18; or to whom it has been "*given* to believe in Christ," Phil. i. 29.

The author also objects to the interpretation contended for, that "it is at utter variance with the exegeis of the passage in hand." He says,

"The hardening which was threatened against Pharaoh, was not a hardening causative of, or even precedaneous to, but in consequence of, and therefore subsequent to, his own actual and obstinate wickedness."—p. 338.

But this representation of the matter is a pure *invention* of the author; it is contradicted by almost every passage in which the "hardening" is mentioned. We may quote a few of these as specimens —Exod. iv. 21, "But I will harden his heart, *that* he shall not let the people go;"—vii. 3, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt: But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you;"—ver. 13, "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, *that* he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said;"—viii. 15, "When

Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said." (See also ver. 32;—ix. 12; x. 27; and xiv. 4, 8). In these passages, the "hardening" is almost uniformly referred to as "causative of," and therefore "precedaneous to," Pharaoh's refusing to let the people go, or to "hearken" to the voice of Moses and Aaron. It is *not* "threatened," nor referred to as a "consequence of, and therefore subsequent to, his own actual and obstinate wickedness."

Having thus stated and defended our own view of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, we may now take a glance at that of the author. He has devoted a large part of a long Lecture to the subject; and in its discussion he has evinced very considerable skill and ability, particularly in refuting *some* of the interpretations which have been adopted regarding it. We cannot help thinking, however, that his own hypothesis is as unsound as that of some of those to which he has objected. And though he has fabricated a very pretty system of psychological and moral philosophy in its support, it will not stand investigation. His whole theory is vitiated by a fundamental error, to which we have already adverted—namely, that the hardening was an "alternative to be resorted to only on the supposition of a *preceding* and *obstinate* unyieldingness," p. 346. But it is one of the plainest things imaginable,

that this "obstinate unyieldingness" is the very "hardening" itself. Where *this* existed, it would have been a work of supererogation to harden any farther. From the very first God had said, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."

The author says:—

"There must have been certain specific effects *naturally* and *necessarily* produced in the sensibilities of Pharaoh's heart by that determined unbelief, in view of which, and failing his conviction and conversion, God purposed to harden him, and thus fit him for his merited destruction. It is psychologically impossible that such determined unbelief could be cherished by the monarch, and yet produce no effects in the sensibilities of his heart. Faith always "works," and works upon the "heart," and so does unbelief," p. 348.

The "specific effects" to which the author refers, he says, must have been "evil," and must have been, "from the very nature of the case," either (1.) "insensibility to the *danger* impending over him for not permitting the Israelites to depart;" or (2.) "insensibility to the obligation under which he was laid to allow the Israelites to depart;" or (3.) "a complex insensibility both to his danger and to his duty," p. 348.

The author adds:—

"A natural and *necessary* effect, when predicated of the mind, is manifestly an effect which, besides being in congruity with its occasioning cause, is *necessitated*, and is thus, in the circumstances, rendered unavoidable," p. 348, 349.

Now, we admit all this: and we are rather surprised to find such sound Calvinistic doctrine inculcated from the Morisonian Chair of Divinity! If "faith always works," and "so does unbelief," it will follow that "unbelief" always naturally, necessarily, and unavoidably produces the specific evil effect of insensibility to duty. The author, indeed, does not determine that *this* specific evil effect is the one always produced; but it is manifest, from the *nature* of unbelief, and from all the circumstances of Pharaoh's case, that "insensibility to duty" is *the* "specific evil effect" which unbelief always produces. This being self-evident, the question naturally arises, "Whence is it that any sinner, any unbeliever, ever becomes converted to the faith of the gospel?" The author has placed the unbeliever on an inclined plane, down which he is "necessitated" to go; and we submit that unless the grace of God, as held by Calvinists, be vouchsafed, he must sink into everlasting perdition.

Though we concur with the author as to the "evil," or hardening effects of unbelief, we decidedly object to ascribe these effects to God as their "efficient cause"—except in that peculiar sense in which God is the cause of, and has foreordained "whatsoever comes to pass." This is to make God the author of nearly all the sin in the world. It does not, of course, appear to the author in this light. Nevertheless, such a conclusion seems to

us unavoidable, from his theory of the matter, as explained by himself. This will immediately appear: meantime, we may remark, that it is to us exceedingly plain that the unbeliever himself is not only responsible for all the effects of his unbelief, but is the efficient cause of them, at least in the sense in which he *can* be the cause of any effects terminating in himself.

The author goes on to say:—

"To explain this subject a little more particularly, suffer me to draw your atention to the fact, that God sustains a peculiar relation to those *emotional capacities* within us, which constitute the *sensibility* of our minds. This peculiar relation is *exceedingly different* from that which he sustains to the volition-power of our minds, that is, the will," p. 350.

Here we differ from the author. We cannot comprehend that the "peculiar relation" of God to the will should "differ" at all from that which he sustains to the "sensibility of our minds." There can be no doubt that the will is very much under the influence and guidance of the feelings and inclinations, or, as the author phrases it, "the emotional capacities within us." If, as the author maintains, God stands in the "relation of a *necessitator*, or efficient cause" to these emotions, he must also, to a great extent, stand in the same relation to our wills. For, what are these "emotional capacities?" The author tells us "they are *affections*, or unde-

signed and often undesired outbursts of *feeling* that are summoned into being, and caused to flow forth at the bidding, and under the influence, of objects from without."—p. 352. Again, says he, "the will cannot summon up directly, as it pleases, this emotion or that. It cannot, by any direct effort upon the sensibility, induce a feeling of *love* or *hatred*, or fear or security," &c.—p. 353. We shall not stop to enquire how far the "feelings, or "affections," to which the author refers, are "involuntary" —as the author maintains; or how far they are the result of corrupt human nature, or of previously-cherished opinions, desires, and habits: But this we maintain, that they frequently sway the will, and lead to instantaneous action; and that, as they form a large part of man's moral nature, he is responsible for them.

As the author cannot "conceive of involuntary sin being within any entity on earth," (p. 208) and as much of the wickedness of this world consists in, and arises from, those "outbursts of feeling that are summoned into being" by "objects from without," and therefore, according to the author, "involuntary," and not only so, but "necessitated by God," it is plain that this theory, while it exonerates, to some extent, the perpetrator of the wickedness, it throws a large share of the blame on God himself. The author is furious against the doctrine of necessity, as held by Calvinists; but he himself

is a *necessitarian* of the most objectionable description. The idea of making God the "necessitator," or "efficient cause," of all those vile affections, feelings, and desires that spring up in the minds of the wicked and impure, is a notion truly "execrable."

The author is a great stickler for the "freedom of the will," as held by Arminians; but, according to his own psychological system, this freedom is a vain boast—it is not worth contending for. It is like the freedom of the captive, who can only "*dream* of all things free." He may *talk* of liberty, but his voice cannot be heard for the clanking of his chains. The following passage reveals the kind of freedom which is enjoyed in the regions that acknowledge the sway of the author:—

"But I would say, in the *second* place, that the emotional conditions of the sensibility are not necessitated by the volition-power, or will, that belongs to the same mind in which the sensibility inheres. In other words, the mind does not, by means of its own will, necessitate the condition of its own sensibility. This is manifest not only from the fact already noticed, that the emotional condition is frequently involuntary, and in *spite* of the will; but also from the fact, testified by our consciousness, that the will has no *direct* means whatsoever of controlling the sensibility. The will cannot summon up directly, as it pleases, this emotion or that. It cannot, by any direct effort upon the sensibility, induce a feeling of *love*, or *hatred*, or fear, or security. All its power over the sensibility is *indirect*. It can direct the attention to some object, between which and the sensibility there is a divinely-constituted correlation, and it can fix the attention

upon that object. Thus far, but not one hair's-breadth farther, can the will act upon the emotional condition of the sensibility. The efficient cause, however, of this emotional condition, is a cause which operates not before, or in, the presentation of the correlated object, but between the presentation of the object, and the production of the emotional condition. It is not, then, in the mind's own will that we can find the efficient cause of the emotional states of the sensibility," p. 353.

The author elsewhere speaks of the "will" as a "sovereign;" but if so, the extent of the royal domain, as here represented, is very limited—it is more like a cage, beyond the bars of which the imprisoned bird cannot pass "one hair's-breadth." If the "will" is a king, his subjects are in rebellion, and come and go in "spite" of their sovereign! In these rather humiliating circumstances, it may seem ungracious to hint at any farther abridgement of the royal authority and power. The "will," it seems, "*can* direct," and "*can* fix, the attention." But where the affections of the ***heart*** are fixed on one object, the efforts of the "will" to direct and fix the attention on some other object must be attended with some difficulty. Perhaps the author, who seems to be on intimate terms with his majesty, may be able to tell us, in a future edition of his work, whether the royal "will" is not, in such circumstances, frequently frustrated, and its authority trampled in the dust.

We now go on to the consideration of another section of the chapter—verses 19—24. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

Our limits will not admit of our giving any thing like a full exegesis of these remarkable verses. We may, however, take a glance at their general bearing and import. In the first of them, the apostle states another objection to his doctrine, which he doubtless anticipated might be urged against it on the part of some of his readers. If it be true that God pardons whom he will, and hardens whom he will, then it will follow that our destiny is entirely in the hands of God; and if so, what can we do? how can we be blamed? The objection is plainly founded on the assumption that the doctrine of the apos-

tle is inconsistent with the responsibility of man—"Why doth he find fault? for, who hath resisted his will?"

Such is the objection, and it is right to state it fairly, and to look it broadly in the face. The very same objection is frequently brought against the system of doctrine for which we are contending. Indeed, it is quite a favourite objection on the part of the author and his friends; and we have no wish to disguise the fact, that it involves a question of great difficulty—it involves a point which we cannot explain; and for this good reason that it is incomprehensible—it lies beyond the ken of mortal vision. The point to which we refer, regards the nature or *modus* of that control which God exercises over the soul of man. We cannot doubt that this control is absolute. To deny this, would be to shut out God from the government of the world. Neither can we doubt that it is exercised in a way that leaves man morally free, that is, free to act as he likes or chooses; and therefore, fully and solely responsible for his every thought, word, and act.

These two truths—the absolute control of God, and the free agency and responsibility of man—we believe most firmly, though we confess our inability fully to explain or reconcile them. The author, and Arminians in general, *assume* that God *cannot* exercise this control, without impinging on the

"freedom of the will,"* and thus destroying man's moral nature. We believe, however, that God is *able* to do this. Our Lord tells us that it is "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God:" and he adds, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." We understand this to mean that *it is* "possible" for God to save and convert the most obdurate sinner; and of course that he is *able* to do it in perfect harmony with the moral nature of man. To deny this, is obviously and presumptuously to set "*limits* to the Holy One of Israel:" For, how can we know what it is competent for God to do in a case of this kind? We cannot, however, enlarge on this point.

Our readers will observe that only one of the above truths is objected to—the sovereign and absolute control of God over the destiny of man. The other truth—man's responsibility—is admitted

* The author remarks—"That the will would cease to be will were it necessitated by God in its volitions, through the medium of *motives*, or otherwise, I do not stop to prove. I assume it; and assume it on the presumption that every man's consciousness will be a witness to him, if he will but listen to its intimations, that his will has never been necessitated, and never can be," p. 351.—The author, we submit, should only speak for himself. It may be so, that *his* "will" is not determined by "motives," that is, arguments or reasons; but we would scarcely have expected him to confess it. However, it satisfactorily accounts for some parts of his book.

by the objector. Indeed, it forms the rock on which he has erected his battery, and from which he expected to be able to drive the apostle from his position. It is of importance to keep this distinctly in view, in order to appreciate the point and force of the apostle's answer. That answer, with great logical propriety, is limited to the one point disputed. The apostle says not a word regarding the other. He admits that God "finds fault." He admits most fully the responsibility of man. There is no dispute between him and his objector on that topic.

The answer of the apostle is contained in the 20th and following verses. He first administers a rebuke to the objector, for daring to impugn a doctrine so plainly taught in God's Word, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" If the facts be as the apostle had represented them, and as the Scriptures represent them, then they *must* be in perfect consistency with the responsibility of man; and it was therefore highly improper to object to the doctrine founded on them, even though there might be some difficulty in reconciling it to the reason of man.* The apostle next reminds the objector of the true relation in which he stood to

* "St. Paul abashes this arrogance (of the objector) with an appeal to the absolute character of God, to whose ways the creature must render an unconditional submission, even where it is not able to comprehend them."—*Olshausen.*

God, as a creature—"Shall the *thing formed* say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Shall the creature dare to utter a complaint against the great Creator? "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" How unseemly would it be for a vessel of clay to find fault with the potter for making it in some particular way?

The apostle assumes, of course, that we are *sinful* creatures. This idea is essential to a right understanding of his reply; and it is plainly involved in the language of the 22d verse, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, *endured with much long-suffering* the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." The proper light in which to view human nature, is that of a sinful and corrupted mass—out of which God, as the great potter, makes such vessels unto honour and glory, as it pleases Him.

The apostle, it will be observed, in replying to the objector, does not attempt to *eat away* any of his previous statements,—on the contrary, he confirms all that he had formerly said, and reiterates his doctrine in still stronger terms. God, the apostle affirms, has the same power and authority over his sinful creatures that the potter has over the clay; and nothing, in point of completeness, can exceed this. It is impossible to conceive of any language, or of any figure of speech, more fit-

ted to express the idea of thorough and absolute dominion.

The intelligent reader will observe that the construction of the paragraph commencing with the 22d verse is defective. It is what grammarians call an *anacoluthon*—that is, a sentence grammatically incomplete, as when the latter part of it glides off into a different construction from that which the beginning indicated, leaving the conclusion to be mentally supplied. Our translators have supplemented the interrogative *What*, at the beginning of the sentence; but this is hardly sufficient to render the meaning perspicuous. If we substitute "Who can object" for "What," the sense will be more obvious—"Now,* *who can object* if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, *hath showed mercy*† even on us, whom he

* There is a conjunctive participle (δὲ) at the commencement of the paragraph, which is not translated in our English Bibles. —It may be rendered "Now," as above, or "Moreover."

† There is, also, we consider, an ellipsis in the construction here, which we have supplemented as above. Many expositors, however, do not suppose that there is any ellipsis. They understand the passage to teach that God "endures" the wicked that he might show his wrath and his power, *and also* "that he might

hath called," &c. Dr. Hodge gives the sense of the passage thus: "What right have we to object, if God, for the display of his righteous justice, punishes the wicked; and for the manifestation of his glory, pardons the vessels of mercy?" He adds, "This gives a good sense, and one consistent with the context. It assumes, indeed, that the construction of the passage is irregular; but this assumption must be made, whatever interpretation is adopted."*

Having thus briefly indicated the view we take of the verses under consideration, we may now take a glance at that of the author. He maintains that the objection stated by the apostle must needs be that of a *Jew;* and he takes occasion to heap on his devoted head all manner of opprobrious epithets. He denounces him as a "God-insulting caviller," an "ungodly antagonist," and a "mere man of Belial;" while the objection itself is denounced as a "canting cavil," and the "hollow-souled cavil of a Christ-rejecting Jew." The au-

make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy;" but though we have no objection to the sentiment thus expressed, it strikes us as too recondite. We prefer the other exposition on account of its plainness and simplicity; and it has the sanction of several distinguished interpreters.

* Hodge on the Romans, (Paisley Edition) p. 284—which see, for a more particular explanation of the phraseology employed in these verses.

thor pursues a similar line of conduct in reference to the unfortunate king of Egypt, on whom he pours forth a perfect torrent of abuse. We cannot admire the author's taste in this matter. How different is the manner of the apostle! How calm, and dignified, and gentlemanly, are his language and bearing! They form a perfect contrast to that of the author. We read that "Michael, when contending with the devil, *durst not* bring against him a railing accusation." But what "the Arch-angel" durst not do, the author *dares* to do. We recommend him to avoid this in future. Let him take a lesson on "good manners" from the apostle Paul. Let him expunge from his work all those abusive epithets, with which its pages are thickly strewed. And though this may have the effect of considerably diminishing its bulk, it will certainly add to its value.

We are unable to see any good reason for concluding that the objection must necessarily be that of a Jew. It seems just as likely to be that of a Gentile—some speculative Roman. The Jews were familiar with the doctrine of the apostle regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart; and were not, therefore, likely to object to it in *his* case. They might object to its application to themselves; but the objection does not assume this form—it is general—and would apply to any and every case of hardening. The author is careful not to hint that the objection

is one that is often made by Arminians and Morisonians against the Calvinistic system. Had he allowed such a hint to drop from his pen, it might have led to the suspicion, that as the objection was almost exclusively an Arminian one, the doctrine objected to was probably not only apostolic, but Calvinistic also.

The author, after calling on his readers to mark that the objection is a cavil, an "actual cavil," proceeds to ask them,

"What can you think of that system of theology which, when ascribing to God two contradictory wills, one revealed, and another secret, expressly utters, by the mouth of one of its most renowned living defenders,* such words as these,—'The types or expressions of these two wills are to be found in the two texts commonly quoted to illustrate them; the first, Rom. ix. 19, "Who hath resisted his will?" the second, Matt. xviii. 37, "How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not?"' O shame! Are Christ's own deep-hearted words, 'How often would I have gathered you?' to be linked and wedded to the hollow-souled cavil of a Christ-rejecting Jew? Is the hated, and impious, and illogical objection of a man who is deemed, by apostolic inspiration, to be "replying against God," to be exalted to be the prop and buttress of almost one-half of God's own heavenly theology? Whence this unnatural union of the canting cavil of a mere man of Belial, and the candid, comely, and heart-captivating cry of the Man-and-God Christ Jesus? Whence this mixture of light and darkness, of sweetness and bitterness, of loveliness and loathsomeness? and whence this chaotic mingling of the very elements of heaven and of hell? Is it not a

* Dr. Candlish.

heart-sickening thing to see the theology that sways a country's heart piled up and castellated high upon the foundation of an unconverted man's cavil?"—Pp. 388, 389.

This is a very pretty rhetorical flourish—a sort of pathetic climax. But it has one serious defect: there is not a particle of truth in it. The author has "piled up" a fair-seeming structure of rhetoric on the subject of cavilling; but the entire fabric is based on a cavil; and thus the "high castellated" erection is in danger of coming down on the "pate" of its ingenious contriver. It might have seemed ungenerous to lift a hand towards its demolition, had not the author furnished us with a benevolent motive for the act. The contemplation of his own work has made him "heart-sick;" and we are pleased to have it in our power to remove the cause of his distress. We have to remark, then, that *it is not true* that "Christ's own words are linked and wedded," by Dr. Candlish, "to the *cavil* of a Christ-rejecting Jew." The "cavil" to which the apostle's opponent gives utterance does not lie in the doctrine, that God's will is "irresistible;" for that is a glorious and a scriptural truth, and *not* a cavil. The Scriptures assure us, that "God *doeth* according to *his will* in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him,

What doest thou?" * The "cavil" lies in the insinuation that there is an *inconsistency* between this doctrine, and the doctrine of man's responsibility; or, between the irresistible nature of God's will, and his "finding fault." This is the "cavil" to which the apostle's antagonist gives utterance; and the author must excuse us for saying that it is one which he himself is frequently guilty of perpetrating—though we should be sorry, on that account, to brand him as a "canting man of Belial." If the cavil had consisted in the statement that the will of God is irresistible, the apostle does not seem to have been aware of it, for he does not utter a word in answer to such an idea;—on the contrary, he has confirmed it as a truth. He does not say, *as the author does*, that the parties referred to "*have* resisted God's will." He does not say a word to this effect. He does not attempt to eat away, or explain away, any of his previous statements by saying that God *only* hardens those whom he cannot melt, such as the "nether-millstone-hearted monarch of Egypt," as the author styles him. The apostle does not say that the "potter *hath not* power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour."

The answer which the apostle gives to the "cavil" is quite antipodal to the one given to it by the

* Dan. iv. 35.

author; and this is conclusive proof that he has entirely mistaken its nature. Indeed, the view which he takes of it is most unsatisfactory, and puerile in the extreme. He represents the objector as arguing that if it be true that the Jews were "hardened *by God*," he would be unreasonable in finding fault with them for their "*hardened condition;*" which, as the author interprets the matter, consists simply in "insensibility to danger,"—a feeling somewhat allied to courage. And this he characterises as a "*cunning* quibble." But it is too transparent a piece of silliness to deserve the name of a quibble. It is incredible that any man would give utterance to a sentiment so ineffably and ridiculously absurd. It is incredible that an inspired apostle like Paul would expend ink and paper in stating and refuting an objection so utterly and inexpressibly puerile. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans was not written for the edification of ninnies. Do any of our readers imagine that we are speaking in too depreciatory terms of the author's definition of this cavil? Let them only suppose the case of a man who had been found in arms against his sovereign, and had, in consequence, been cast into prison; and who, when brought to trial, should stand up and plead that the king had no right to "find fault" with him for being *in jail;* as it was quite in accordance with the "royal will" that he was sent there; and no one could "resist his will." Does any one suppose that

this case has been selected by us as specially fitted to exhibit the trifling nature of the author's view of the cavil? Why, he himself has given two "illustrations of the case," which serve to "illustrate," even more forcibly than the above, the sheer inanity of his idea of the matter. He supposes a person to take poison, or to throw himself into the ocean, where of course God would "deprive him of his life by the instrumentality of the waters." Now, is it credible that any one would ask, in reference to such a case, "How can God 'find fault' with the man for *being drowned*, or for *being poisoned*, seeing it was God who deprived him of his life by the waters, or by the poison." Enough, however, of such puerilities.

But we must not overlook the author's allegation, that ours is "a system of theology which ascribes to God *two contradictory wills*, one revealed, and another secret." As this is a very popular objection on the part of some, and withal a somewhat plausible one, it may be proper to make aremark or two regarding it. We have already intimated that it is a glorious and a scriptural truth that the will of God is irresistible—"None can stay his hand." Hence the security of those "on whom he will have mercy." Of course, by the will of God, we there meant his fixed determination, his purpose, his decretive will. No sane person could understand us to speak of his *preceptive will*, as exhibited in

the moral law. God's will, in *this sense*, is resisted and frustrated every day, every hour. This is a self-evident truth—a thing that cannot be denied, and therefore to be taken for granted. The preceptive will of God is revealed—his decretive will is, generally speaking, secret, or unknown, till the event declares it. Hence the distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God. It is plain that this twofold view of the will of the Almighty is just and scriptural. And it is undeniable that there are some actions, or events, in which these two views of the will of God *seem* to run counter. The death of Christ, for example, was agreeable to the purpose, or decretive will of God; while, at the same time, it was contrary to his holy and righteous will. "It *pleased* the Lord to bruise him." He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, with the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever God's hand and his counsel determined before to be done," Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28. It is thus plain that the death of Christ was, in one sense, in accordance with the will of God; while, in another sense, it was the most atrocious crime ever committed, and therefore most contrary to the preceptive will of God. These things are undeniable, however they may be accounted for; and we do not profess to be able fully to account for them. We have not been

admitted into the counsels of the Eternal, and do not presume to be able to fathom the depths of his Infinite mind.

It thus appears that the objection of ascribing to God "two contradictory wills,"—in so far as there is any truth in it,—is one that applies to a scriptural "system of theology;" and we are content to have our system placed in the same category. We consider it a proof of its soundness; and we are obliged to the author for pointing it out.

We do not mean to be understood as admitting that, by our system, we ascribe to God "two *contradictory* wills"—that is, two wills in the *same sense*. It is a very common objection, on the part of "Unitarians," to the doctrine of the trinity, that it involves a contradiction; and if it were maintained that God is *one* and *three*, in the same sense, the objection would be a valid one; but as this is not the case, it falls to the ground. In like manner, when we maintain, in reference to the death of Christ, that, in one aspect of it, God was "pleased" with it, and willed it; while, in another aspect of it, he viewed it with detestation, as contrary to his holy and preceptive will—it is plain that we are not imputing to God two contradictory wills, because the event in question has two very different and opposite aspects. In one respect, it is the most glorious event that has ever occurred—it has filled heaven and earth with hallelujahs, and it will ever

continue to fill eternity with ecstatic bliss and praise. In another respect, however, it is the foulest deed ever perpetrated beneath the sun. We presume the author himself views it with very different and opposite feelings, according to the aspect in which he contemplates it.

The author devotes an entire lecture to the consideration of the 21st verse—"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" This verse contains a very beautiful little parable, remarkable for its simplicity, clearness, and unity of design. It seems as if it would be impossible to mistake its plain and obvious meaning. Our readers may wonder at the idea of a long lecture being devoted to its elucidation. The author seems to have felt that some apology was needed for dwelling on it so long, and accordingly he intimates that "it has been so frequently mystified, and therefore misunderstood, that it may be proper, with some degree of care and fulness, to spread it out in all its various items of detail." We are afraid, however, that we must class his own exposition among those which have tended to "mystify" and obscure this interesting portion of Scripture.

One of the most obvious rules to be observed in the interpretation of a parable is, not to stretch its application unduly, or beyond the scope and design

of the writer who employs it. This is a rule, the propriety of which is admitted by all critics and interpreters. We could easily illustrate its importance, and the pernicious effects of departing from it. It is judiciously remarked by Dr. Olshausen, in reference to the parable before us, that "Nothing but a want of sense could understand the comparison, as though Paul's intention was to represent God, *in all respects*, as an humble artizan." Now, we apprehend that the author has been guilty of this indiscretion. He has stretched its application, or "spread it out" beyond the proper limits; and has thus caused it to give utterance to sentiments the very opposite to the design of the apostle in giving it forth. The design of the apostle is most obvious, namely, to illustrate the sovereign and absolute control of God over the destinies of man. When the apostle asks, "Hath not the potter *power* over the clay?" he obviously means us to understand that God *hath* "power," that is, a just right and title, as well as *ability** to dispose of his sinful

* The author does not evince unusual candour in his treatment of the word (ἐξουσία) rendered "power." He tells us that the term is actually translated *liberty*, in 1 Cor. viii. 9; and *right*, in two other passages; and *authority*, in thirty-nine instances in the New Testament." Now, why not tell us that it is translated *power* upwards of sixty times, and in one instance *strength*. Besides, in many of the instances in which it is translated *authority*, it obviously *includes* the idea of *might*, as well as *right*. "By ἐξουσία," says Dr. Bloomfield, "is denoted

creatures as he sees fit. As none of them *deserve* to be made what is represented by the "vessels of honour," it must be an act of grace and mercy on the part of God, to exert his "power" in their behalf, so as to exalt *any* of them to this honourable position. And the language of the parable implies, beyond all peradventure, that God *hath* "power" to bestow this honour on as many as he pleases. If the potter has power over his clay to make what vessels he pleases "unto honour," surely God has, *at least*, as much power to extend mercy to "whom he will." We submit that this is a truth clearly, obviously, and unmistakably taught by the parable.

But this, though the most important feature of it, is not merely overlooked by the author,—he actually sets himself to prove that God has very little power in the case—not so much as any humble potter possesses over his clay. He admits, indeed, most fully, that "God's *authority* over all his intelligent and moral creatures, in a state of probation for eternity, is infinitely absolute, irresponsible, uncontrolled, and uncontrollable." p. 417. But what avails *mere* "authority," however absolute, in a case of this kind? There is something ineffably absurd in the idea of a potter having sole

not so much *power* as *right*;" but he adds, "POWER RESULTING FROM RIGHT, as in 1 Cor. viii 9, and elsewhere." This, we believe, is a correct rendering.—*See Liddell and Scott's Lexicon.*

and undisputed authority over his clay, but without any real power over it. It suggests the idea of a man skilled and experienced in the arts of pottery, and having just and legal titles to his clay, but *without hands*. In such a case, of what avail are all his titles, and skill, and experience? This is the humiliating position in which the author places the Almighty Potter. He represents it as the "first and foremost desire of God to make *all* his vessels unto honour;" and as trying, "by *all possible means*, to fit and fashion them for glory;" but, alas! he finds himself unable for the task. He is "shut up" to make the greater part of them "vessels unto dishonour." Now, can any thing be imagined more preposterous in the way of exposition than this? Why, this is to contradict the apostle to his face. It is to run in the very teeth of the parable. Had it been the object of the author to *refute* the apostle, he could not have adopted a more effectual method of doing so. The doctrine of the apostle plainly is, that God "hath mercy," and *can* "have mercy on whom he will;" and the parable is intended to illustrate and confirm this truth. It teaches, in a manner which we should have thought it impossible to gainsay, that as the potter has undoubted "power" to make what vessels he pleases "unto honour;" so God also has unquestionably power to exalt what persons he chooses to honour and glory.

The entire structure of the author's exposition of the parable rests on the assumption that it is the "first and foremost wish of the Potter to make ALL his vessels unto honour." This is a point, therefore, which we expected that the author would see to it that it be well established. Our readers will be surprised to learn on what a very slender foundation so weighty a superstructure has been reared. We must quote the author's own words, lest we should be accused of weakening them. He says,

"This is partially evident, 1st, from the fact, that these vessels are the *first* of which mention is made in the parable. This seems to show, that the *foremost wish* of the Potter's heart was to make his uniform vessels "vessels unto honour." But that this was his wish, is rendered more clearly evident, 2dly, By the fact, that it was but one mixed lump of clay, out of which he purposed to form his vessels. Now, since only two kinds of vessels are supposed to be manufactured by him, a nobler and a baser kind, it is manifest, that if the prepared lump had been originally of inferior material, fit *only* for being formed into the baser kind, he would never have attempted to make any of the richer, and costlier, and nobler vessels out of it. As he is supposed, however, to make "vessels unto honour" out of it, we must come to the conclusion, that he considered the entire homogeneous lump to be natively FIT to be manufactured into these nobler vessels. This being the case, and there being, confessedly, but one congruous lump, surely he must have desired his uniform vessels, that were to be made out of that lump, to be ALL of them "vessels unto honour." But that this was his desire, is, 3dly, rendered still farther evident, by the necessary application and interpretation of this seventh item of the parable."—p. 427.

Here are *three* reasons, numerically considered, for the author's conclusion; but as the *third* is involved in the other two, it must be set aside. With regard to the *first*, it is of the most flimsy description. It indicates the exhausted state of the author's resources. We always consider it a sure indication of a bad cause, when its advocates attempt to found on the mere collocation of the words in a sentence, such as the one before us. If the author had only stepped forward to the next verse, he would have met with a very serious refutation of his argument. There we read, *first*, of God's "willingness to show *his wrath*." Are we to conclude, then, (whatever may be the case with the potter), that it is the "first and foremost wish" of God to "show his *wrath?*"—This settles the *first* reason.

With regard to the *second*—though we might reasonably set it aside altogether, on the ground that it involves an extension of the parable beyond its proper limits—yet, waiving this, we submit that it is based on two erroneous assumptions. The author has in his eye the case of a potter who makes two kinds of vessels out of two distinct qualities of clay—the one quality adapted for fine and costly vessels, and the other for common and inferior ones : whereas the apostle has in his eye the case of a potter who makes two kinds of vessels "out of the *same* lump." This is expressly stated

in the parable ; and it corresponds with the thing signified by the clay, or by the "lump"—namely, human creatures, who are all made of "one blood." Again, the author assumes that all the vessels made of the finer clay, must be all designed for honourable vessels. But there is no necessity for supposing this. A skilful potter may make, "out of the same lump," even of an inferior kind of clay, less and more honourable vessels, as he pleases. And it is precisely a case of this kind to which the apostle refers.

We have thus disposed of the evidence, deduced by the author, from the parable itself, for his doctrine, that it is the first and foremost wish of the Almighty Potter, to make all his vessels unto honour. He himself does not seem to feel that he is treading on firm ground; and accordingly, he attempts to strengthen his position in the following manner:—

"Besides, we find a hundred other parts of Scripture lending us their commentaries on this same item of the parable, and telling us, in words that cannot be surpassed for a certain and unequivocal sound, that God really wished "all men to be saved," that is, he desired, as the Almighty Potter, to make *all* his vessels "vessels unto honour." Do they not tell us, again, that he is "not willing that any should perish?"—and, if we translate these terms into the language of our parable, must they not run thus, "He is not willing that any of his vessels should be vessels unto dishonour?" And do they not tell us, again, that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that they should turn unto him and live?"—and this, if

transferred into the parabolic phraseology of the pottery, would run thus—"He has no pleasure in making vessels unto dishonour, but he would rather, far rather, fashion them all into vessels unto honour.' "—p. 428.

Now, we frankly admit that the passages of Scripture, to which the author here refers, *seem*, to some extent, to favour his doctrine; but it is so only in *appearance*. We admit most freely that there must be a sense in which it is true, that God is "not willing that any should perish," and that he has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that they should turn unto him and live." Far be it from us to dispute this. But what we maintain is, that these passages must be true in a sense that is compatible with the doctrine of the apostle, and with his parabolic illustration of it; and consistent, moreover, with other Scriptures, and with the facts to which the apostle has been referring. They must be true in a sense not inconsistent with God's omnipotence, and sovereignty, and with the doctrine that he "hath mercy on whom he will, and hardeneth whom he will;" and consistent, moreover, with the fact, that God is "*willing* to show his wrath, and to make his power known." It will be observed, that none of the passages referred to convey the idea that God's mercy, or grace, or kindness, is "EQUAL TO ALL, and most impartial to each," (p. 427). This is the doctrine of the author, but it is not the doctrine

of Scripture. We admit most fully that God's mercy is "over all his works," and that in some measure, it is extended to all. But to maintain that God's "love" to Esau and his posterity, for example, in relation to their "immortal interests," was "equal" to what it was to Jacob and his posterity, is a doctrine so directly opposed to Scripture facts and to express Scripture statements, that we must be excused for not attempting to characterise it. Is the author such an "ingrate" as to maintain that God hath showed *him* no greater love, or kindness, or mercy, in casting his lot in a Christian country, and in a Christian family, than he has shown to those whose lot is cast in the "dark places of the earth"—the "habitations of horrid cruelty?" Away with the thought! We have a better opinion of the author himself than to suppose that he would carry out his principles to *this* extent.

We have alleged that the author deduces from the parable a doctrine the very opposite to that of the apostle, namely, that the potter *hath not* power, that is, real and actual power, and not *mere* authority, over his clay. And lest it should be supposed that we have in any way misrepresented his sentiments, we may give his own words. He says,

"Do you ask how it comes to pass that his first and foremost wish is frustrated? Your question shall be answered without any unnecessary delay. But meanwhile I request you simply

to observe *the fact* which constitutes the eighth item of the parable, viz., that while it was the potter's wish that all his vessels formed out of the well-prepared lump should be 'vessels unto honour,' he actually finds himself, notwithstanding, *shut up* to fashion not a few of them into 'vessels unto dishonour.'"—Again, "While it is the first and foremost desire of God to give to all sinners on earth an immutable destiny of glory and honour, and while he uses suitable means to have them crowned with this destiny, yet he finds himself shut up to give an unalterable destiny of dishonouring woe to multitudes of men," &c.—p. 430.

Our readers must be curious to know what answer the author gives to the question, "how it comes to pass that God's first and foremost wish is frustrated?" He says,

"The reason is not stated in the words of the parable; it is, however, very plainly implied. *If* the potter really wished the vessels to be all 'vessels unto honour,' what must have been the reason why he was shut up to fashion some of them into 'vessels unto dishonour?' Must not the reason be this—that those vessels which he had desired to mould into 'vessels unto honour' were found by him—in the process of fashioning them on his whirer, or wheel—to be so spoiled and corrupted in their material as to be unfit to be made into fine and costly 'vessels unto honour?' Every potter is liable to have some damage done to his clay. A designing enemy could easily so intermix it with foreign substances that it would be entirely spoiled, so far as its fitness for forming fine vessels is concerned. The potter might hence be obliged, contrary to his primary and most earnest desire, to make his baser vessels—such as his *saggars*, and other coarse articles of ware—out of the clay that was originally of the choicest description," p. 431.

These sentiments appear to us most extraordinary. We feel at a loss how to characterise them. The author does not seem to be in the least ashamed to

avow his belief in the *weakness* of the Omnipotent, *quoad* the case in hand. It will be observed that he admits that the "reason" (and he might have added the "fact" also) why God is unable to make *all* the vessels unto honour is "not stated in the parable;" but he thinks it is "very plainly implied." We submit, however, that the *contrary* is something more than "very plainly implied." The whole pith, and point, and substance, of the parable plainly is, that the potter "hath power" to make what vessels he pleases "unto honour." This is self-evident; and nothing but a perverse disposition could lead any one to deny it. It is true that a potter may some times have "damage done to his clay." But what has this to do with the case in hand? The parable is not constructed on the principle of including *all* that may *possibly* happen to a potter in his vocation. To stretch it out in this way is just to exemplify what the Professor of Erlangen considers as indicating "a want of sense." Besides, has the potter no means of protecting his clay? Are there no bars, and locks, and police officers, with which he may defend his property against the enemy? And has the Almighty Potter fewer resources of this kind at his command? Is His arm shortened that it cannot save, and cannot defend his property against all and sundry?

The doctrine of the author on this subject exhibits the Almighty in a light which we decline to characterise, and have no wish to dwell on. It is also a

very "sinner-discouraging" doctrine. If the greater portion of mankind are "so spoiled and corrupted," and "so intermixed with foreign substances," as to be beyond the "power" of Omnipotence to save them, even after trying "all *possible* means" to do so, theirs must be a hopeless case indeed. If God himself be unable to help the poor sinner, to whom is he to look? Is he to put his trust in "an arm of flesh?" Is he, instead of putting his trust in God, to put his trust in *himself?* If the "clay in the hand of the potter" has been "so spoiled and corrupted" that the potter, with all his skill and experience, and strong desires, is unable to make out of it "vessels unto honour,"—is the "clay" itself to be called on to arise, in *its own might*, and endeavour to shape itself into glorious and honourable vessels? And is this the *new* gospel, of which we hear so much and so boastingly? If so, it is not a gospel for "publicans and sinners." It may do for the decent, and the moral, and the respectable; but not for the lower and baser class of transgressors. This is indeed "another gospel;" but not the "glorious gospel of the grace of God." It is no gospel for the "chief of sinners." But, blessed be God, it is not the doctrine of Scripture. Its lessons and facts stand out in bold contrast to the doctrine of the author on this point. There we read of one "mighty to save," and "able to save *to the uttermost* all that come unto God by

Him." We read of one out of whom "seven devils" were cast, and of another who was dispossessed of a "legion." Here were "foreign substances," in the proportion of seven to one, intermixed with the clay of human nature; but the Saviour was not thereby "shut up" to degrade them into vessels of dishonour. Again, we read (1 Cor. vi.) of those who had been "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners;" and yet, though thus "spoiled and corrupted," God was not thereby "shut up" to make them all "vessels of wrath." Though thus polluted, they were "washed, and sanctified, and justified, by the Spirit of our God." And what God was able to do in these and other similar cases, he is able to do again. The author tells us, that Satan has "*thrown* into the hearts of sinners a spoiling unbelief." Be it so. But is there no one able to throw out what Satan has thrown in? Is Satan *really* the God of this world? Is he the strongest power in the universe? Is there not a "stronger than he?" We trow there is. We read of some to whom it was "*given* to them to believe." Faith is declared to be "of the operation of God." He takes away the "stony heart," and gives a "new heart," and a "heart of flesh," on which he writes his law. "Is there any thing too hard for God?" Let no sinner, therefore, however heavy

the burden of his sins, despair. Let no one be scared by the doctrine of the author from coming unto God, for he is *able*, and *willing* also, "to save to the *uttermost* all that come to Him by Christ."

It will be observed that the author's doctrine regarding the inability of God to make what vessels he pleases unto honour, is based on the assumption, that it was the "first and foremost wish of the potter" to make all his vessels unto honour—"*If* the potter really wished" so and so. But we have already shown the untenableness of this assumption; and hence the conclusion built on falls to the ground. The author evidently feels that he has no very solid foundation for his doctrine from the parable itself: but he tells us that he is not left "entirely to the guidance of inferential reasoning in the determination of this matter." He thinks that in the parable there is "manifestly" an "allusion" to Jer. xviii. 1—4, where we read, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house; and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."—The author assumes, in the interpretation of this passage, that the "reason" why the vessel was "marred" in the potter's hand, was

owing to the "corruption of its material." He also assumes that the potter had intended and wished, at first, to make a "fine and costly vessel," but was shut up to make an inferior article, in consequence of the corruption of the clay. Now, it is almost needless to say that these are mere assumptions—they form no part of the inspired record; we therefore set them entirely aside. But even though they had been veritable facts, we cannot admit the author's conclusion. We protest against his method of interpreting a mere "allusion"—(of which, by the way, there is no proof). Perhaps we may be able to convince even him of its unsoundness. According to the passage in Jeremiah, the potter is represented as making *only one* attempt to fabricate his vessel into the form he had originally intended; and this attempt having failed, it was not repeated. Are we to conclude from this, that God only makes *one* effort to save sinners—that he only gives them *one* opportunity of becoming wise unto salvation? This conclusion is just as legitimate as the one attempted by the author.

There are several other things in the author's exposition of the verse before us, on which we meant to have animadverted: but as our remarks have already extended far beyond the limits we had prescribed to ourselves, we must forbear. For a similar reason, we shall pass over, without note, the greater number of the remaining verses of the chapter.

As, however, the author attaches unusual importance to the 30th, 31st, and 32d verses, we must make a few brief and general remarks on them. He regards them as containing the "key" to the whole chapter. "By making use of this key," says he, "I passed with ease, and with glorious gladness, along the entire structure of the chapter, opening my way into verse after verse," p. 7.

Let our readers examine the verses referred to. We give them below, in their connexion.* It will be observed that the apostle, in verses 25 to 29, adduces several passages of Scripture in illustration of the statement contained in verse 24, that the "called" of God, or the "vessels of mercy," em-

* Verses 25—33, "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

braced "Gentiles" as well as "Jews"—"Whom he hath called, not of the Jews *only*, but also of the Gentiles." These passages also intimate that the Jews, or the great body of them, were no longer exclusively the "peculiar people" of God. They intimate, however, that a portion of them were still so—a "remnant shall be saved." The apostle, in verse 30, proceeds to deduce a general conclusion from these things: "What shall we say then?"—that is, What conclusion shall we come to in the matter? The answer to this question immediately follows—namely, "that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, *have attained* to righteousness"—that is, though not seeking salvation, they yet attained to it, "by the righteousness of faith." Whereas, "Israel, which followed after it, *had not* attained" to the wished-for consummation. This fact was altogether so remarkable, and so different from what might have been anticipated in the circumstances, that the apostle considers it proper to give some explanation of it. "Wherefore?" says he—that is, How has it happened that the one people have attained to salvation, though not seeking it; while the other people, though earnestly seeking it, have not been successful? The answer is, "Because they sought it not *by faith*, but as it were (or, as if it could be obtained) by the *works of the law*." Such is the apostle's explanation of the remarkable fact referred to. Perhaps our readers will

be surprised to learn, that it is in this explication that the author affects to have discovered his "key" to the solution of *all* the difficulties which, for years, had surrounded his path, and interrupted his progress, while attempting to investigate the ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

"That one word UNBELIEF," says he, "is the key-word that unlocks the meaning of every verse in this discourse. It is the Œdipus word that unriddles the entire reputed enigma. It is the clear phraseological Sun in the great firmament of God's veritable revelation, that dispels and disperses far away all the mist and the mystery within which men have unwittingly enshrouded this chapter of chapters," p. 521.

We think we already hear some of our readers saying to themselves, "What does the author mean? How can 'that one word *unbelief*' explain the reason why Jacob and his posterity were 'chosen,' and 'loved;' while Esau and his seed were rejected and 'hated,' before any of them were born, or had 'done any good or evil,' or had believed or disbelieved?" The reason for these things, the apostle assures us, was "that the *purpose of God*, according to *election*, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth." Which are we to believe—the author, or the apostle? And how does the "word unbelief" explain the 21st verse? Are we to understand it to mean, that "the potter" *hath not* "power over the clay" to make what vessels he pleases "unto honour;" but that it depends

chiefly on the clay itself what parts of it shall be made into honourable vessels ?

According to the author,

"The real, and true, and *solitary reason* why the apostle had to write, in reference to his countrymen, such melancholy things as are contained in the preceding sections of this chapter," was their "unbelief." He adds, "Were we to consult men concerning this 'mystery,' we would find that multitudes would not scruple to aver that the reason,—the sole, and solitary, and necessitating reason—was to be found in the unexplored bosom and secret *decrees* of God. They spurn from them, as if it were a heresy, the idea that they should look into the *men themselves*, to discover the reason of their everlasting woes."—Pp. 507, 508.

Now, there are two distinct questions on this subject which the author here chooses to confound; and hence the "mist and the mystery" in which he has enveloped himself. The *first* of these questions is substantially the one put and answered by the apostle in verses 31, 32. The sole reason, undoubtedly, why the great body of the Jews were hovering on the brink of everlasting destruction, was their rejection of the Saviour. And *we do not believe* that there are "multitudes" who would refuse to admit this. We at least do not know of one who would hesitate to acknowledge it. We *do not believe* that there is a single Calvinist who would "spurn from him the idea that we should look into the *men themselves*, to discover the reason of their everlasting woes." What says Dr. Hodge? "The ground of the distinction between the saved and the lost is to be found, not in men, but in God. But

the ground of the condemnation of men is *always in themselves*." * We call on the author to make good his allegation.—The *second* question referred to lies behind and beyond this one; and relates to the reason why it is that some men believe the gospel, while others do not. Some do not believe on Jesus, because they have *never heard* of Him—"How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard ?" This has ever been the most numerous class of mankind; but the author does not inform us how his "key" can be made to "unlock" the mystery of their case. With regard to those who are privileged to hear the gospel, the cause of their unbelief is doubtless *in themselves*. In their case, God has used means for their salvation—much more abundant means than he has used in the case of the heathen. But we cannot admit—what the author maintains—that he has used "all possible means;" nor even all the means that he has employed in the case of others. It is not every one, for example, who has enjoyed the *same* means of grace and salvation as the author himself. Every Pharisee, or "son of a Pharisee," did not enjoy the *same* means as the apostle Paul. In this way we can trace up to God the proper answer to the question, "Who maketh thee to differ ?" The largest proportion of Christians can trace their religion, under God, to the circumstance of their being brought up in a

* Hodge on the Romans—p. 298.

christian family. The grace and mercy of God met them on the threshold of being, and followed them all their life long. How very different all this is from the case of multitudes who have been continually subject to influences unfavourable to piety and religion, we need not say. Some are brought up not only in ignorance, but in the most inveterate prejudice. Hence we read that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them," 2 Cor. iv. 4.—Others however do believe in Christ to the saving of their souls; and how is this? What account do the Scriptures give of this matter? The "god of this world" has not been permitted to "blind the minds" of all. There are some into whose hearts "God *hath shined*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. If the author had only read on a little farther in the epistle to the Romans, he would have found a somewhat different explanation of *this* "mystery" than the one which he represents as the "solitary reason"—we say a different explanation, because it involves an answer to a different question, as already noticed. In chap. xi. verse 7, we read, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but THE ELECTION (or those elected) HATH OBTAINED IT, and the rest were *blinded* unto this day." And this accords exactly with the doctrine of the apostle in his epis-

tle to the Ephesians, where he says, that "God hath *chosen* us in Christ *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ;—being *predestinated* according to the PURPOSE of Him *who worketh* ALL THINGS *after the* COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL." Again, says he, "You hath he *quickened*, (that is, made alive spiritually) who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." You, "who were *by nature* the *children of wrath* even as others." "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*," Eph. i. 4, 5, 11; ii. 1, 8. This, in fact, is the current language of Scripture on this point; and we need not therefore dwell on it.

The author's "key" fully explains the reason why *some* men do not obtain salvation, namely, such as reject the Saviour, though favoured with the light of the gospel. On this point, we have no dispute with the author. Arminians and Calvinists are perfectly agreed on this topic. But does this "key" explain the reason why God, in the dispensation of his spiritual favours, and in the bestowment of "theocratic and Messianic" blessings, "passed by" the "millions of reprobates" descended from Ishmael, and from Esau? This is the "enigma" which it was the author's special business to "unriddle," but which he has failed to do. The at-

tempt to show that the "one word unbelief" explains the meaning of "every verse" in the ninth of the Romans appears to us, therefore, to indicate a degree of overweening self-confidence almost approaching to mental imbecility, which it is painful to characterise. It is unworthy of the author—unworthy of his talents and learning.

We must now, however, come to a close.—We have endeavoured to weigh in the "balances of the sanctuary," the leading conclusions and interpretations of the author, and we have found them "wanting." Such, at least, is our conviction; and we have given our reasons for it. Let our readers judge for themselves. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." All error is dangerous, and must, from its nature, be prejudicial to the interests of the soul, and of vital godliness. The native tendency of the author's system is to lead the sinner, in an important sense, to put his trust in himself, and not in God. There are, according to the author's doctrine, multitudes who are so "spoiled and corrupted" that God *cannot* save them —he is "shut up" to make them "vessels of dishonour." In these cases, if the sinner would be saved, he must put his trust in himself. But what saith the Scripture on this point? "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm."

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